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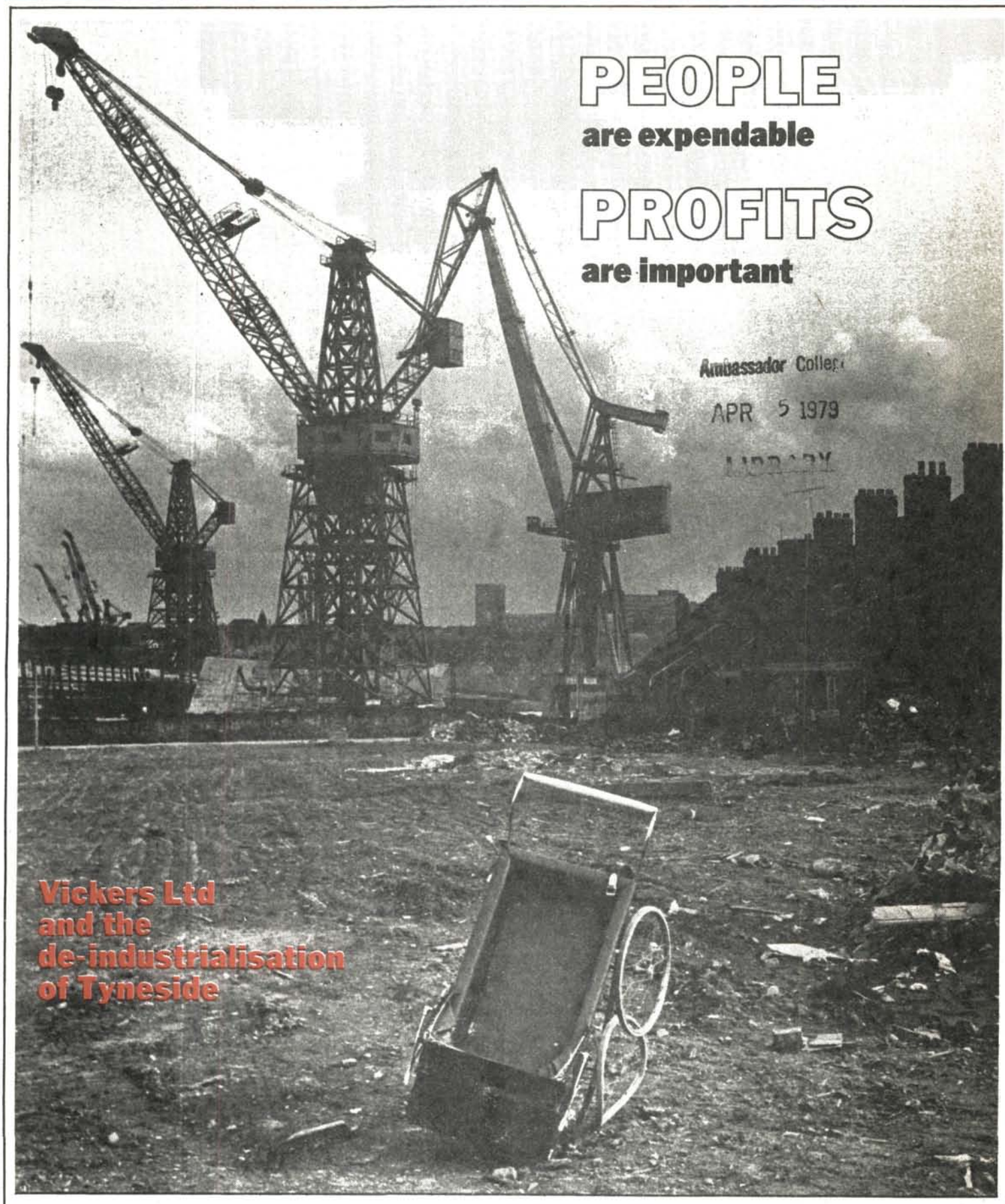

China's wars/ Paul Foot's diary/ Berlin's Wall

Devolution and the Windsor State

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Tories sleight of hand hides GLC debt

Francis Wheen and Christopher Hird write: The Tory controlled Greater London Council are perpetrating something of a financial confidence trick on their ratepayers by claiming that they will be free of debt by April 1980. Their real achievement is something more modest and owes much to the previous Labour controlled authority. Four-fifths of the GLC's £2 billion debt finances housing – its own and Londoners' mortgages. The Inner London Education Authority and London Transport account for another chunk. The remaining services, account for £150 million; it is this debt which will be repaid by the end of the next financial year. This debt is low for two reasons. First, since 1974/5 the GLC has financed all its non-housing capital spending from the rates, instead of borrowing. Second, contributions from ratepayers have already reduced the debt by £41 million. The mechanism by which the GLC has thus financed itself internally – the Capital Fund – was set up by the Tories in 1969/70, but was added to substantially whilst Labour was in control. Next year the GLC will devote a large part of their £180 million budget for non-housing capital spending and loan repayment to wiping out the remaining non-housing debt.

To claim, as the Tories do, that this prevents London facing the same problems as New York, is nonsense. London has never faced any problems remotely like New York because British local authorities area are not allowed to borrow money to pay revenue expenses such as dustmens's wages. If the GLC overspends in one year, it must claw it back in higher rates, or reduced spending the next. Furthermore, the GLC will be borrowing £360 million this year, mainly to re-finance part of the debt on its housing stock, which it is in the process of giving away.

This masterly gamble by GLC housing chief George Tremlett seems to be paying off. After a series of secret negotiations, only four London boroughs have refused to take the GLC estates Tremlett has offered them. The GLC own about 200,000 flats and houses, financed by about £1.2 billion worth of loans. Rates and government subsidies do not cover the interest charges and the costs of management and repairs to maintenance: the rates contribute about £40 million a year. This will continue to happen despite the Tremlett scheme. Houses are being transferred to the local boroughs, with the obligation to pay the interest on the debt incurred when the GLC built the house. The local boroughs also meet the costs of repair and management. If any borough is out of pocket the GLC will meet the deficit from a special rate spread across the whole of the GLC for the next five years.

The scheme ensures that no industrial borough loses, but some gain. Boroughs which receive old, low debt, but well maintained houses will make a revenue profit. If they sell the property for more than the value of the debts they pocket the difference. Most boroughs in this position are Tory controlled. Hostile Labour boroughs have had little choice but to agree to the scheme as the Tremlett wagon rolled on – as it encountered the alternative housing stock which the GLC offered them. If they didn't agree, Tremlett would sell the houses or put up the rents, already up by a quarter in the first seven months. In addition many GLC tenants would probably prefer the local council as their landlord: a survey among GLC tenants in Camden showed 2 to 1 in favour. Some council's decisions may also have been tipped in favour of the Tremlett scheme by the offer of rare chunks of undeveloped building land.

Characteristically, the hardest hit will be the tenants in greatest need. In 1976 two-thirds of the GLC's new tenancies in the suburbs – where they have family houses with garages – went to people from inner London stress areas. This will not happen in future, as houses built with the money of all GLC ratepayers are handed over to councils such as Bromley to sell off, so that well paid commuters may have their rates reduced.

Vietnam taught a lesson 'by whatever means'

William Shawcross writes from Hong Kong: Neither side has been generous with information during China's invasion of Vietnam. In the first three days of the attack, the Vietnamese were most loquacious, claiming that their forces had killed or wounded 3,500 Chinese soldiers and destroyed about 80 tanks, while on their own side, many innocent civilians had been slaughtered. Peking said almost nothing about the scale of the fighting or the extent of casualties.

From what little information that is so far available – most of it from Western and Japanese intelligence agencies – it seems that China had massed around 200,000 troops along the Vietnamese border, together with an airforce of about 800 planes, including most of China's MiG-21s and F-9s. How many of these troops and planes have been committed to the assault inside Vietnam is not yet known.

By contrast the Vietnamese did not commit any of their 25 main force divisions to the defence of the north. About 15 of these are already fully committed in Cambodia, where Khmer Rouge resistance is still surprisingly strong. So instead, the brunt of the Chinese invasion has been borne by between 30,000 and 60,000 militia troops – who appear to have been badly mauled.

According to some reports, the Chinese have made airstrikes up to 30 kilometres into the country, meeting no resistance from SAM ground-to-air missiles. The Vietnamese appear to have decided that if the Chinese purpose was limited, as Peking claimed, there was no point in risking their best troops; and if the Chinese did move further south, then Vietnam's main division would be in the best position to defend the capital. It seemed quite a subtle strategy, which would force the Chinese to make the difficult decisions.

The attack had been predicted ever since Vietnam overthrew the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia. In January, travellers to Kunming airport in China's Yunan province saw it stacked with military planes. Twice the Chinese warned that Vietnam had pushed China beyond the limits of forebearance – and this was exactly the phrase used of India before China's lightning invasion in 1962. When Deng Xiaoping personally warned US leaders that Peking would have to teach Hanoi a lesson 'by whatever means', American intelligence had already concluded that those means would be military.

In explanation of its attack on 17 February, China referred not to Cambodia but to the constant skirmishes along its frontier with Vietnam: it claimed the Vietnamese had made more than 700 attacks in the six months alone. (There may well be other explanations for the invasion, as Anthony Barnett's analysis, page 204, suggests.)

The Vietnamese have warned that other nations in South East Asia may be next on Peking's list: just as China supported genocide in Cambodia, they claim, so it will underwrite it elsewhere in the area. Thai Prime Minister Kriangsak seemed to be voicing a common opinion when he said: 'We only want one thing. Just do not get us involved'. Foreign Ministers of Southeast Asian Nations then called for the withdrawal of foreign troops from all countries in Indochina, noting especially their fear of Russian involvement.

Rickets reborn

Ron McKay writes: Glasgow's Asian community is carrying out a self-help and prevention campaign to eradicate rickets – caused by vitamin D deficiency – which is crippling Indian and Pakistani children throughout Britain. The disease has generally been claimed to already have been eliminated.

'There is a rickets epidemic in the Asian community,' a senior paediatrician told the NEW STATESMAN 'and I'm afraid I'm bound to say that if it were happening among white children there would be a national outcry.'

Asian rickets has been noted since 1961 when it was discovered in a 14-year-old Pakistani girl attending Glasgow Royal Infirmary for treatment for leg pains. Subsequent research has shown that it is widely prevalent among Asian teenagers and pregnant women. One senior specialist believes that up to 30 per cent of schoolchildren and 25 per cent of expectant mothers suffer from it. But despite the evidence and the simple cure – a vitamin D supplement – the DHSS has signally failed to respond to the preventable epidemic.

In 1973 a group of doctors showed the way in wiping out the disease cheaply and totally effectively. In co-operation with the Spillers milling company they distributed chapati flour, fortified with vitamin D, to a control group of Asian teenagers in Glasgow and monitored them over six months. In all cases the level of the vitamin in the blood rose to a preventive level. A 16-year-old with severely bent limbs was completely cured simply by eating his normal daily intake of four enriched chapatis.

But despite this cheap, proven prophylactic – about 5p per 70lb sack of flour – the DHSS have failed to recommend amending legislation to the government which would permit the fortification of flour. A sub-committee of the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy – aptly referred to by the acronym Coma – has been considering the question for more than two years. Coma reports to – and in this case has failed to report to – the DHSS on dietary and food policy. The only response by the department has been the issue of a guidance booklet on rickets, published two years ago, which was dismissed by experts as naive and ill-informed.

In the absence of positive action Glasgow's Asian community has begun to issue literature as well as vitamin capsules through Asian organisations and welfare groups in the city. Similar campaigns are expected to follow in towns and districts with a high Asian population, notably Bradford, Birmingham, Wolverhampton and London's Southall. Meanwhile, Coma slumbers on.

More slag

Rob Rohrer writes: Whether it was speculation or reclamation, to use Sir Harold Wilson's famous distinction, the Wigan slag heap affair which started so profitably for the Field family may soon be ending with rather less of a windfall than they anticipated.

Greater Manchester Council want to buy the 60 rubble covered acres still owned by Tony Field, Lady Falkender, sister Peggy, and the mysterious Manx property developer Philip Moore Clague, for their own reclamation scheme.

Not surprisingly negotiations between the two sides are barely amicable ('their price is ridiculous' says Moore Clague). GMC – who ultimately have compulsory purchase power – are only offering around £2,000 an acre, considerably less than the Fields and Moore Clague were hoping to get from the profligate Ronald Milhench in 1973. Then, Milhench, who had already poured £300,000 into the Field coffers for one parcel of land at Ince-in-Makerfield, was agreeing to pay a further £600,000 for the 60 acres. This deal fell through when Milhench was caught up in the saga of Sir Harold's forged signature, for which the Wolverhampton businessman received a 3 year jail sentence.

GMC's offer for the unsold 60 acres is similar to the price per acre they recently paid for a similar 30-odd acres Milhench *did* buy from the Fields. In 1973, using the seemingly endless bankroll of fringe bank Cripps Warburg, Milhench had paid £300,000 for the site, which cost the Fields £27,000 in 1967. Williams & Glynns Bank, who later swallowed up Cripps Warburg's liabilities, were glad to accept £2,000 an acre for the site. One GMC source says this figure reflected the great amount of reclamation still needed.

The 60 acres left are reputed to have cost the

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Fields and Moore Clague £135,000. The most they can hope for from the GMC is about £120,000 and there is hardly likely to be anyone else interested in buying. 'It is a classic case of blight,' complained Tony Field to the NEW STATESMAN. The only consolation for the Fields is that this loss will hardly tarnish the substantial profit they reclaimed from the first deal.

Eastern alliance

Ian Black writes from Jerusalem: Israeli intelligence is extremely concerned about Israel's eastern front, where Syria and Iraq – once among the Arab world's most bitter rivals – continue moves towards unification. A mutual defence pact between the two countries signed, at the end of January, a statement that each country constitutes 'strategic depth for the other, a promise to refrain from mutual subversion and recent agreement to resume pumping Iraqi oil through the Syrian port of Banias after an almost three-year break have all buttressed Israeli fears that there is much more substance in the current merger effort than in previous moves towards Arab unity.

Veiled warnings have recently appeared in the Israeli press suggesting that Israel should not tolerate the presence of Iraqi troops in Jordanian territory. They are alarmed, too, that the PLO, its ties with Jordan severed since the 1970 'Black' September slaughter, will find a patron in the emerging Syrian-Iraqi alliance. For the first time, in January, the Palestine National Council convened in Damascus. Cairo is no longer a congenial venue. The PLO has been cooing about the historic encounter between the erstwhile Ba'ath enemies in Baghdad and Damascus. The long hot summer of 1978, when the Iraqi-backed Abu Nidal group waged war against the mainstream of the PLO, and especially against the Syrian-backed Al-Sa'iqa group, has been conveniently forgotten. Israelis fear that if a peace treaty is signed with Egypt, Iraq and Syria might launch a limited offensive against Israel on the Golan front. Such an attack could force Sadat to choose between his emotional and contractual commitments to other Arab states and his obligations to Israel. This may explain why part of Article Six of the draft Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty (the 'priority of obligations' clause) is giving negotiators trouble.

Jordan and Saudi Arabia would be forced to take a stand in such a conflict. If they were drawn into the Syrian-Iraqi orbit this would be a blow to American hopes of building a new alliance based on Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and – Israelis care to believe – Israel. But during the recent Middle East visit of U.S Defence Secretary Harold Brown, it became clear that the Americans would like, as a possible long term policy option, to gain a foothold in Iraq and wean it away from the influence of the Soviet Union. They would play on Baghdad's fear of instability after the turmoil in Iran.

Israel would prefer to keep Baghdad exposed to the pitfalls of its relationship with Moscow (regularly marred, but never ruined, by the execution of local communists). They may also hope that the huge Shia minority in Iraq will be influenced by the events in Iran, perhaps beefing up now-dormant Kurdish separatism in the process. Unable to directly influence events inside Iraq, Israel is keenly interested in encouraging its instability. It will doubtless be trying hard in the future to dissuade the US from taking too strong an interest in its welfare.

Highland manoeuvres

John Hatton writes: For many years people in Morar, a tiny village in northwest Inverness-shire, have believed that the loch of the same name about two miles from the village has concealed a monster. Called Morag, the beast is supposed to have frightened fishermen on the loch in much the same way as her more famous sister Nessie.

But the local fishermen now using the loch are seemingly in for a much more provable fright at the hands of the man who founded the SAS Regiment, the 'GB75' movement, and assorted mercenary cadres – Colonel David Stirling, who has a summer home and estate on the shores of Loch Morar, Scotland's deepest and in many respects most beautiful loch. Stirling has hatched up a weird and wonderful plan to make the loch a 'no-go' area for locals and summer tourists alike in collaboration with another local landowner, the Master of Lovat, the son of his wartime commando crony and cousin, Lord Lovat. Lord Lovat's daughter, Fiona Fraser, now helps run one of Stirling's mercenary societies.

Under the scheme the specialist in commando tactics proposes the establishment of a salmon fisheries board to restrict the hitherto free access enjoyed by Morar people to the loch. According to Stirling's plans, submitted to the local community council, access to Loch Morar will be controlled by walkie-talkie-carrying bailiffs who will patrol the loch in commando dinghies. Not only will fishermen be subject to surveillance but so will everyone who uses the shores of the loch. 'All camping and caravan sites will be kept under surveillance because certain innocent-looking visitors will turn out to be professional poachers', said Colonel Stirling in his report. How it is possible to poach on a loch which presently enjoys free fishing is not stated.

Furthermore, to make his policing of the loch more effective, all boats will be banned from many areas of it and the colonel also hopes to have closed four rights of way.

Stirling is now seeking finance for the scheme from the Highlands and Islands Development Board. Independent accountants already predict that the idea will be a commercial flop and local people are wondering why the 63-year-old colonel – who has a reputation for shrewdness – should be

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willing to risk financial disaster by closing off about 40 square miles of the West Highlands. Many of them, however, are too scared to speak of their speculations to local pressmen. As one Mallaig community councillor said, 'Opposition has suddenly become muted. The possibility of reprisals has been very clearly spelt out'. Stirling owns much of the freehold of both Morar and Mallaig, and many of the local residents are his tenants.

Hot air on nerve gases

Brian Beckett writes: The government seems readier to grant freedom of information to bootleg nerve gas manufacturers than to the rest of the public. It is dragging its feet on the issue of removing patent specifications containing full descriptions of the manufacture and use of the gases and other toxins. Amongst these are instructions for making an aerosol of ricin – the deadly poison used recently to assassinate BBC broadcaster Georgei Markov.

Seven basic UK patent specifications for various nerve gases were withdrawn by a special act of Parliament after a 1975 *Sunday Times* article. But last October the foreign patent section of the British Library still contained American equivalents to three "missing" UK specifications, as well as basic American versions for other nerve gases, including VX – no longer available from the Patent Office. The Library thus contained virtually all the information removed from the Patent Office in 1975 – plus a great deal more. The three UK patent equivalents which had been overlooked in 1975 were immediately withdrawn from the Library. But virtually all the American material remains in the British Library, leaving it a better source of lethal information that the Patent Office ever was although none of the items available are any longer of British origin.

Arts minister Lord Donaldson, whose responsibilities include the British Library, recently wrote to Bruce Douglas-Mann MP claiming that removing American patents seemed rather haphazard, pointing out that they are widely available in libraries outside the UK. He neglected to mention that all the British nerve gas patents are also widely available in libraries outside the UK. Further withdrawals are at least being considered, but no date has been set for a meeting on the subject. The logic is less than compelling since if there are grounds for removing British patents, the same must hold true for the American versions or – if not – there is no obvious reason for Parliament not to allow the UK specifications back into the files. The cosmetic approach of the partial withdrawal solves nothing apart from soothing offical sensitivity.

Whichever view one takes, the Americans are at least more honest. The US Government have no plans for any removals from the Patent Office or US libraries especially since doing so might contravene the Freedom of Information Act.

Three US patents involving VX have been withdrawn, but two of them are relatively harmless as they do not show how to make the gas. One patent still on the shelves appears harmless but does show the reader how to make VX. Another US patent left in reference is for the compounds VE and VM – only marginally less lethal than VX. Another is for ricin. But the patent for preparing ricin for aerosol dispersal is far more threatening then its use to murder Georgei Markov. This step forward for science was patented by the Chemical Corps of the US Department of the Army as early as 1952.

Numerous other patents available include nerve gases and military incapacitants designed to interfere with vital physiological and psychological processes. The Government's recent approach has not been coherent or consistent. Officials have not come to grips with the fact that the original legislation has been circumvented by the publication of US material.

Open Files

Sarah Spencer writes: In 1968, Haringey was one of two London boroughs to appoint a local ombudsman, a year before the Government had announced its intention to extend the ombudsman system to local government. But the Labour controlled council rejected a move by its own housing committee to give clients of the housing department the right to see, challenge and correct their own files from the start of this year.

The resolutions that all save medical files be open to their subjects from January 1st was passed by the council's housing committee. Despite a move to bury the resolution, the principle was accepted by the full Council. Implementation was postponed, however, pending a full report by housing officers on the implications of the proposal, including the legal position of the Council, and its officers, should the contents of any file be considered defamatory by the individuals concerned. In November the Council then accepted a compromise which fell far short of the original proposal. Now any individual who wishes to see his or her file can give notice to the Chief Executive who then arranges a meeting at which the contents of the file will be selectively revealed — presumably avoiding any passages which might be offensive.

Amongst others, the local branch of NALGO had objections to the move and initially threatened to black implementation. They have now however accepted the principle and will implement the scheme subject to agreement on a number of points.

NALGO fears, reasonably, that its members could be liable to legal action should any defamatory judgments about individuals, currently protected as 'private correspondence', be made public. Yet this fear goes right to the heart of the argument that clients should have the right to check the accuracy and relevance of information about them, and control the use to which it is put. Crucial decisions about an individual's life should not be taken on the basis of secret, unchallengeable and possibly defamatory reports.

Local authorities collect and maintain a great deal of information about residents. As administrators of nearly 40 means-tested benefits this includes information on income and expenditure as well as many personal details. At present there are few legal restraints on the use of this material.

In last week's article on Housing Associations, an inadvertent error marred a concluding sentence on the effects of the 1974 Housing Act. It should have read: 'The 1974 Housing Act now shows signs not of providing choice, but of introducing class stratification and re-enforcing the stigma attached to being a council tenant.'

FREE SPEECH

After Puebla

The Puebla conference ended two weeks ago. The British public, or at least that part of it which presumes to be informed by the national press, is very little the wiser about the meeting's importance. Yet earlier the British press had told readers that Pope John Paul II went on a historic journey to Mexico to open a conference of Latin American Roman Catholic bishops; that the meeting was of international significance at a time when the Church had a Polish leader, when the Church was moving on to a new progressive road and that the Church had to decide what path to take in the continent – with the traditional establishment and military regimes, or the liberation movements.

The European jargon of leftwing/rightwing, fascist/marxist was used to explain the politics of a continent where despots have been proclaimed progressive leaders and ostensibly moderate politicians have gone down as the most extreme reactionaries – and of a man who is the spiritual head of millions in every continent.

For the British press the Pope's visit to Puebla was a media event on a par with a senatorial election campaign in the United States: the Pope wore wide-brim hats, he spoke in Spanish, gave interviews in English and the Mexican Government did not fine him for saying Mass under the terms of the anti-clerical legislation dating back to the constitution of 1917 – a clause which has not been used for almost 50 years.

A London reader would not have known that the much awaited inauguration speech, on January 28, had taken place. The interested Briton would have had to find *Le Monde* or wait for the Catholic weekly *The Tablet* the following Friday.

Immediately accessible to British readers were only the cables of the international news agencies which carried an extremely brief selection of quotes; reduced even further when reproduced in the newspapers. The United Press International distributed to its British subscribers a report which assured in its first paragraph that the Pope had scotched the hopes of Latin America's "Marxist wing of the church". Which invites the remark that only in the tortuous mentality of Fleet Street's cosmopolitan insularity could it be speculated that a Pontiff, born in Poland, *might support 'Marxist movements"* anywhere

The primary concern is that the British Press fails to understand, and hence tries to ignore, a continent where matters now taking place (other than the World Cup) could have considerable effect on Britain in the near future (oil production, the arms race, nuclear development, the closing of markets, territorial disputes, etc.). Yet only the BBC, among all the British media, has a Latin American staff correspondent, based in Buenos Aires, to cover the South American continent in addition to the Reuter international service

The press may by its action have achieved the most thorough form of censorship; it has induced its readership to believe that what is of no interest in the newsroom should arouse no curiosity in public.

Andrew Graham-Yooll

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SOUTHEAST ASIA
Anthony Barnett

What were the real motives for China's invasion?

The 'punishment' of Vietnam

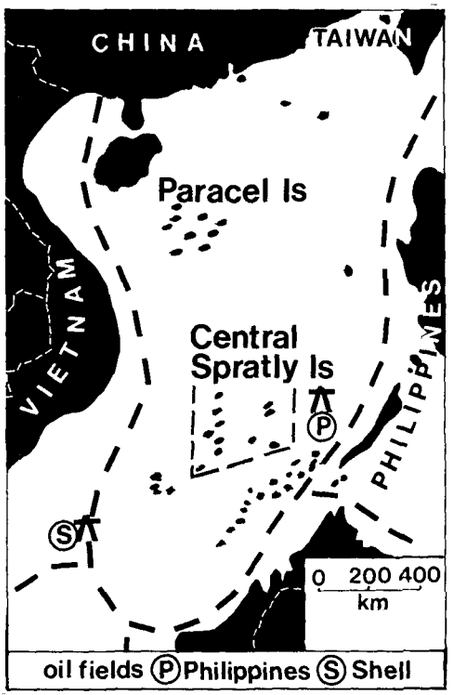
WHEN ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI visited Peking last May and set in train the 'normalisation' of Sino-American relations (which for the Chinese means a virtual alliance with the United States), Deng Xiaoping told him that he saw Vietnam as 'the Asian Cuba'. As an analogy drawn by the leader of a socialist country, it ought to have been quite a compliment. But what happened to Cuba when its revolution displeased its immense northern neighbour? If Vietnam is the 'Asian Cuba', does China wish to become the Asian United States?

There is little doubt that China regards Southeast Asia as its own sphere of influence. Were it in a position to do so, it would declare a 'Monroe Doctrine' for the lands to its south. Vietnam's position astride the land bridge to Southeast Asia proper has precipitated what must be the most fantastic and may be the most irreconcilable territorial dispute on the globe today. The map shows China's claims on the sea area to its south, regarded as its 'territory' because of occasional reefs breaking through the waters right down to Indonesia. At present both China and Vietnam lay claim to the two major groups of islands, the Paracels and the Spratlys. Peking occupies the first and Vietnam most of the second. But the dispute is not simply over islands. China's claims to the seabed extend over a vast area south of the Spratlys, where oil deposits hold out the prospect of economic independence for Vietnam.

Relations between the two countries began to deteriorate as long ago as 1954, at the Geneva Conference. It was there that Vietnam was divided and Chou En-lai, as we have since learnt from the *Pentagon Papers*, played a decisive role with the carving knife.

Chou (and Mao) sought three main objectives at Geneva. First, they wanted to neutralise Indochina and rid it of the threat of American troops. Second, they hoped this would enable them to break the military encirclement of China by means of an international treaty, which in turn would also allow them to break out of their diplomatic isolation and forced dependence on the Russians. Finally, if they could achieve this by acting as the guarantor of neutral states such as Sihanouk's Cambodia, while dividing Vietnam, their suzerainity would be complete. Chou secretly informed the French that he recognised the reality of the South Vietnamese government they were attempting to construct. His plans misfired – with the ironic result that his country's diplomatic isolation was only ended when the war that followed between Vietnam and the United States looked like being won by a Vietnamese party no longer beholden to Peking.

NIXON'S VISIT to Peking in 1972 can be taken as *the* major breaking point. He sought then to return to the Geneva agreement as the Chinese had conceived it – and found a willing response. Almost certainly, both Nixon and Mao wanted the Paris Peace Accords to last, and therefore Vietnam to remain divided. The Vietnamese victory in 1975 was thus a defeat for Chinese foreign policy, as well as for Nixon's. And as the final liberation of South Vietnam took place, Mao Tse Tung sourly



The area inside the shaded line of dashes is claimed by China as its 'sacred territory'. China occupies the Paracel Islands and Vietnam occupies most of the Central Spratly Islands.

informed his entourage: 'The Soviet Union has wild ambitions. It wants to lay hands on the whole of Europe, Asia and Africa'.

A year earlier, Mao had ordered that the Paracel Islands be seized from a small garrison of Thieu's South Vietnamese troops. It was a highly significant move: for the first time, the Chinese escalated their disagreements with Hanoi to the level of force. The two countries shared a common position on Cambodia, albeit for different reasons – so there was no 'provocation' on Vietnam's part, no 'regional hegemonism', no 'expansionism' which needed to be 'punished' (these being the expressions used by China in the current conflict). The islands guard the sea route to Hanoi: it was at once a brutal humiliation and an ominous warning. If China was willing to exploit Vietnam's weakness, when it was still divided and in struggle against the Thieu regime, then China was capable of anything.

After the liberation of Saigon, Le Duan, the General Secretary of the Vietnamese Communist Party visited Peking before going on to Moscow. Disagreement was so complete that no return banquet was held nor any communiqué issued. Obviously, the role of the Soviet Union was one matter that divided Le Duan and Mao: it must have seemed ludicrous to the Vietnamese that the USSR should be regarded as the main enemy, when it had been their major source of support. But there was another crucial issue at stake. As Hanoi's representative left China, Peking republished in the most emphatic terms its claims on the South China Sea.

The following year, just a few months after Mao died, his successors dealt a heavy blow to Vietnam's Communist pride by boycotting the Fourth Party Congress in Hanoi. This was the Congress of victory, of unification and, the Vietnamese hoped above all, of peace. Hindsight gives two other aspects of that Congress a special significance. First, the Cambodians also boycotted it, in what was evidently a co-ordinated action with Peking's. Second, the Soviet Union put overt pressure on the Vietnamese to join COMECON, and was rebuffed. Hanoi was still determined to pursue its policy of maximising independence by conducting an even-handed approach to all socialist countries and calling for them to work together. For Peking, this was simply anathema. Not only did it mean a flat rejection of its cherished anti-Sovietism, but it also challenged Peking's own vanity as a world influence, for Vietnam's was a policy far more attractive to developing nations.

Just over two years later, China caused Vietnam to abandon its policy of multiple-relations. As Vietnam's Foreign Minister put it when he visited Tokyo last December, 'we are sacrificing our independent policy somewhat' because of the 'about face' of the country's northern neighbour. Having forced Vietnam into a binding treaty with Moscow, China then invaded it.

CAMBODIA WAS, of course, the immediate *casus belli*. Here another analogy has been drawn, even less apposite than the Cuban one: the Vietnamese action in Cambodia has been compared to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Almost all observers agree that there had been low level friction between Vietnam and Cambodia after their mutual revolutions in 1975, but that in March and April of 1977 the fighting escalated, with serious attacks by the Khmer Rouge on Vietnamese border villages, killing some hundreds of their inhabitants. Did the Czechs ever attack the Soviet Union?

In February last year, after its own counter-assault, Hanoi issued a three-point peace proposal. It suggested that all troops be withdrawn five miles from the frontier; that Vietnam and Cambodia discuss and resolve their differences (including a disagreement over the border); and that there be international inspection of the cease-fire. If one can imagine Brezhnev making such an offer to the Czechs, one can be sure Dubcek would have accepted. Pol Pot declined to do so.

The conflict between Vietnam and Cambodia was never a 'proxy war' between the USSR and China as Brzezinski has claimed. On the contrary, the determining conflict was between Vietnam and China, with all other conflicts organised around that focal point. Neither Peking nor Hanoi ever wanted open antagonism: both feared it would have incalculable consequences (as indeed they are now beginning to discover). It was against their better judgment that developments in Cambodia, which were of secondary importance to each of them, detonated a major confrontation between the two countries.

If we are to understand how this extraordinary set of conflicts came about, it is necessary to put them into an order of causality. When Pol Pot consolidated his position in Democratic Kampuchea by placing Sihanouk under 'Palace arrest' at the beginning of April 1976, his action followed upon the death of Chou En-lai, who had been Sihanouk's patron, and

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coincided with the (second) downfall of Deng Xiaoping – an event which Cambodia was almost alone in welcoming.

The purge of the 'Gang of Four' in October that year must have come as something of a shock, to Pol Pot, and the rise of Deng to his third life as an even more threatening development. The initial decision to reinstate Deng came in March 1977 (according to his semi-official biography). This coincided with a major purge in the Phnom Penh government, in which prominent leaders disappeared, presumed shot, including Hu Nim, who was the first to greet Sihanouk when the Prince set foot on liberated soil in 1973. Could Hu Nim and the others have favoured a domestic line closer to Deng's 'four modernizations'? If Pol Pot purged his colleagues to protect his own policies, he certainly consolidated a social regime that ran completely counter to the new Chinese approach. To compensate, Pol Pot seems to have escalated the conflict with Vietnam, in order to retain the vital aid of Cambodia's only ally. As Hu Nim disappeared, Vietnam was denounced as an enemy and attacked. The Peking leadership was thereby trapped into supporting a government in Phnom Penh that became increasingly intolerable to Hanoi. Later, China's Ambassador to Laos predicted with approval a 'long, long war' between Vietnam and Cambodia.

If the Peking leadership had been more secure they would surely have done more to avoid such a risky course. But in early 1977 the Chinese Politbureau was deeply divided. Deng was only in the first stage of a comeback that threatened more than one member of the ruling 'group', and none was willing to risk his position by contradicting Maoist policy on an issue such as this. Thus the two weak and divided governments of Phnom Penh and Peking became locked into their disastrous course.

AS THE CAMBODIAN leadership placed itself on a military footing in June 1977, General Giap went to China, for a tour of two or three weeks. A month later he gave the keynote speech to a Vietnamese Army conference on economic construction. His theme was the need for rapid industrialisation, but his ending had a more ominous note: 'Some comrades believe that because we defeated the Americans no other enemy would dare touch us'. Such thinking was erroneous, he went on, and they should remain on their guard: 'If an aggressive war occurs in the future, our enemy will very possibly have a larger number of troops and more modern weapons than before'. This can hardly have been a reference to Democratic Kampuchea.

In September 1977, the forthcoming visit of Pol Pot to Peking was announced and it was made public for the first time that Cambodia was run by a Communist Party, with Pol Pot as its General Secretary. To celebrate the occasion another attack was apparently made against Vietnam. The Cambodian leader's lengthy visit to China was followed by a briefer one from Le Duan, ending on 25 November 1977. The next day the Hanoi government announced, with reference to Sino-Vietnamese relations: 'We will do our best to make this great friendship last forever'. In response, although without actually mentioning Vietnam by name, Peking defended its seizure of the Paracels, insisted that the Spratly islands belonged to China (and were therefore the object of Vietnamese aggression) and concluded, after having so defined itself as being attacked, with the threat: 'China will never attack first, but when it is attacked it will certainly counter-attack'.

By the end of December Vietnam had itself counter-attacked Cambodia. Receiving stiff resistance from the Khmer forces, which evidently surprised and impressed them, the Vietnamese made their peace offer of February 1978. When that failed so too did the 'moderate' policy Hanoi had pursued since 1975. Within weeks the vital rice trade of the South was nationalised, to prevent further speculation under conditions of war and terrible harvests (which were primarily a result of natural catastrophes). This move mainly affected the Chinese bourgeoisie of Cholon, who controlled the merchant networks of the South. Today, they are the 'boat people'.

The nationalisation measures signalled to Peking Vietnam's determination not to submit. Relations between the two countries degenerated rapidly. As Hanoi's dispositions for its full scale move into Cambodia became evident, China very nearly went to war, in the summer, to pre-empt the attack and thus preserve its uncomfortable ally. A decision was taken instead not to intervene directly, but to try to bog down the Vietnamese forces in a 'people's war' inside Cambodia.

Why Deng, having written off Democratic Kampuchea, should have decided upon the Vietnamese adventure is still somewhat mysterious. National pride is hardly the best reason for assaulting other countries and it could well be that internal politics were also a contributing factor. Wang Tung-hsing, Deng's major opponent in Peking was the last and most senior Chinese leader to visit Cambodia. He came under fire in the wall-poster campaign Deng organised to strengthen his supremacy last November. But he was not purged, and Deng may have feared that the humiliation suffered by China in Cambodia would be used against him in the future. Further speculation is out of place.

Recently, *Peking Review* accused Vietnam of 'bullying' China. Vietnam has enumerated 2,158 cases of Chinese harassment since 1974 of which 1,355 were by armed patrols (and we know from the Vietnam war that Hanoi's claims, when enumerated, are relatively accurate). Since Hanoi wanted its Chinese aid, it seems no more likely that it was 'bullying' its neighbour than that it was 'bullying' the United States in 1965. On the contrary, Vietnam feels itself beseiged by the Chinese regime. It went across the Cambodian border not in order to impose an Indochinese Federation, but rather to defend its flank. Obviously, Vietnamese troops should withdraw from Khmer territory when the attacks mounted from Thailand cease. But those who, like the US President, wish to demand such a retreat now should look also to the South China Sea. This is the site of China's real war claims.

Peking continues to insist that it will 'brook no incursion on China's sacred territory' – which implies all too clearly that it may seize the Spratly islands and destroy any oil rigs sunk by the Vietnamese. The Harrier jump jets, which our own Industry Minister is busy selling in Peking this week, are ideally suited to island warfare and will no doubt be 'defending' China's claims in the near future. While China maintains this position, it is obvious that Vietnam will never allow hostile MiGs to be based in Cambodia.

Who can look at the map of Chinese claims and regard Vietnam as the 'expansionist' power of Southeast Asia, and China's invasion as a response to this? Apparently the United States and British governments are able to do so. The verbal attack on Vietnam as an 'Asian Cuba' was launched with the acquiescence of Brzezinski. Now, an invasion has been mounted after Deng's return from the USA, according to the *Washington Post*, he was reassured: any 'punishment' he inflicted upon Vietnam would not disrupt the new alliance. China is not responding to events in Cambodia nor to Vietnamese 'bullying'. In effect, China is punishing Vietnam for its victory over the United States in 1975.

Another attack is launched on Vietnam

Claudia Wright writes from Washington: China is not the only great power resolved to 'punish' the invaders of Cambodia. Before his troops made an invasion of their own, Deng Xiaoping had so impressed the Carter administration with his sabre-rattling talk against the Soviet bear that the United States quietly put into effect a plan to impoverish the Vietnamese.

What the press here have notably failed to report is that the Vietnamese not only defeated the Khmer Rouge regime, but in doing it cut through the large army of Chinese military advisers – at least 10,000 strong – who were sent in during 1978. The Chinese had not experienced such a military hiding at the hands of a foreign adversary for more than thirty years. The Americans reacted with vindictive fury. Immediately after Phnom-Penh fell, the State Department issued priority instructions to its embassies, and late in the week before Deng arrived in Washington, the Australian Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, announced that his government was cutting off all aid to Vietnam. The announcement came so suddenly that it caught unawares the Australian foreign minister in Geneva. The aid, about $5 million in all, was mostly in the form of technical advice and agricultural projects.

The Japanese government, acting in concert according to State Department officials, was a little more cautious. Its promised 1979 aid, approximately $20 million in grants, will continue, but next year's promised allocation of $50 million in soft loans is to be reconsidered. The US campaign also stretched to Europe, where Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands have all rallied to sever aid at Carter's request. France has refused, while the UK is still reviewing its options.

The day after Deng arrived, ambassadors from non-aligned countries were briefed at the State Department by Richard Holbrooke, the assistant secretary for East Asian and Pacific affairs, who told one diplomat pointblank that a visit planned by his foreign minister to Hanoi in mid-February was ill-advised. A Vietnam desk officer at the State Department described the policy as a concerted effort to sever aid programmes to Vietnam: 'The Vietnamese government has been using aid for aggression to carry out war against their neighbours. We can see the need for humanitarian aid to Vietnam for the starving and needy, but this aid allows them to develop resources for military adventures.'

World Bank officials reject the suggestion that the aid which the Vietnamese are receiving could be diverted to military purposes. The bank itself voted a 50-year credit of $60 million over the opposition of American representatives late last year. All of the bilateral aid, they say, is earmarked for particular projects; they don't get a blank check.

This orchestrated embargo is strongly reminiscent of the cutoff of world investment in Chile in 1970. As on that occasion, the decision was taken directly by the US President.

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THE THAMES DEBATES

Llew Gardner takes the chair for three outside broadcasts, dealing with some of this year's major political questions.

Monday 26 February at 11.30pm
WILL SCOTLAND LOSE?

In six days time the Scots go to the polls to vote on devolution. At Hopetoun House, outside Edinburgh, Llew Gardner asks Scottish politicians what is at stake in Thursday's referendum. Can Scotland lose if the Scots vote yes? Will Britain lose if they vote no? Among those taking part are Jo Grimond MP, Tam Dalyell MP, George Reid MP and Teddy Taylor MP.

Monday 5 March at 11.30pm
WHAT IS A TORY?

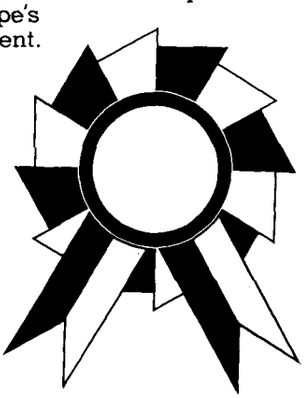
With an election imminent, the Conservative case comes under growing scrutiny. What is the philosophy that encompasses Edward Heath and Mrs Thatcher?

At the Carlton Club in St James's, Llew Gardner puts this question to Lord Hailsham, Peter Walker MP, Reg Prentice MP, writer Paul Johnson and leading party thinkers.

Monday 12 March at 11.30pm
WHO STANDS FOR EUROPE?

In June Britain votes in the first direct election to the European Parliament. What sort of people will represent us in Europe? How many will work for the European idea that set up the Parliament, how many will try to sabotage it?

In Westminster, Llew Gardner asks the candidates themselves about their views and hopes for Europe's Parliament.



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From Thames Television

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There's no business like no business

Few people now imagine that the government's forlorn 'industrial policy' can arrest the startling decline of British manufacturing industry. It is not, however, happening by accident: the process which can be expected, during the eighties, to turn Britain into a net importer of machinery* results in large part from the conscious, profit-motivated decisions of our industrial chieftains. Here CHRISTOPHER HIRD and PATRICK WINTOUR analyse the economic motivations of one particular debacle at Vickers on Tyneside – the human consequences which follow from it and the unusual industrial and political resistance which is being organised.

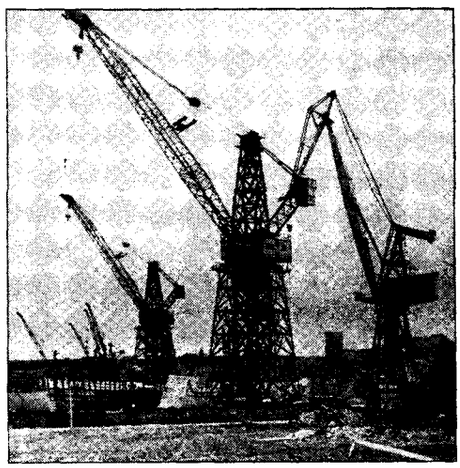
WILLIAM ARMSTRONG was an entrepreneur who knew what the word meant. He made guns when 19th-century technology was quite unsure about the pressures which metals would contain. Therefore he tested his products on bare coastland in Northumberland (troubling local residents, who imagined the French were coming). Several times, he almost blew himself to pieces.

It may have been an extreme application of the principle that business is about taking risks, but it contrasts favourably with the attitude of his corporate heirs on the board which runs the old Vickers-Armstrongs business. Over the last two years, the government have been imploring Vickers to accept sums of public money as great as £12 m. in the cause of keeping open Armstrong's old heavy engineering plant at Scotswood, in Newcastle-on-Tyne. Resolutely, the company continues to insist that even with this help, the risk is greater than they can bear. Equally resolutely, they produce highly-questionable figures to show that their fears are justified.

The attack upon Scotswood and its 750 workers by its owners is a natural matter of concern in Tyneside. But it is a matter, also, of national significance – because it is a precise case-study in the notorious process called 'the de-industrialisation of Britain', which all our political parties deplore, and all of them are powerless to prevent. The desire to close Scotswood arises from a deliberate corporate strategy, embarked upon by Vickers and shaped by pressure from the City of London, with its appetite for short-term results. The consequences for workers and their families hardly need spelling-out in a city where Vickers were once the chief employers – and which has had to watch sceptically while regional-development policies, one after the other, have bounced-off the North-East's unemployment statistics. But what *does* need spelling-out is the connection between the problems which afflict places like Scotswood, and the operation of Britain's vastly powerful, and largely uncontrolled financial metropolis in the South-East.

The City's myopic ambitions, of course, are not the whole story Some of the uncertainties which afflict Newcastle, and other parts of the industrial system – as shown in the problems of the tank-building business – arise from the Foreign Office's bizarre estimate, restated as late as September 1978, that the Shah of Iran could maintain his brutal dictatorship. But the central element is a Vickers strategy which involves the liquidation of a large part of Britain's heavy-engineering industry.

This they are *not* replacing with worthwhile investment for this country. Instead, Vickers have concentrated on building-up their overseas holdings, and have sought within Britain for businesses involving little capital, little skilled labour, and even less risk. The immediate situation is made more remarkable



by the fact that Vickers are about to receive some £100 million from the government by way of compensation for the nationalisation of aircraft and unprofitable shipbuilding assets.

It almost goes without saying that the plans approved in Vickers' glass tower-block beside the Thames – Vickers is centralised to the point that all its money is processed through a single bank-account – have been advanced with minimum workforce-consultation. (The company's tight-lipped attitude extends to reporters: after numerous requests, we got one appointment with an executive, which was swiftly cancelled.) If, in the end, something is to be saved from devastation, it will be due mostly to the resistance which Vickers' employees have begun to organise among themselves. Fragmentation and rivalry has long been the natural condition of British unions, but the Scotswood conflict has brought into existence a unionists' combine at Vickers: capable of facing the reality of Vickers as a many-limbed empire; capable at least of trying to propose new products and new futures for plants like Scotswood and their neighbouring Elswick, eroded by their long dependence on easy profits from the trade in weaponry. It represents, however uncertainly, a new aspect of British trade unionism.

SCOTSWOOD AND ELSWICK, straggling along the industrial riverside of West Newcastle, now employ 3,000 of the 17,700 Vickers workers in Britain. But at the end of the Second World War, the two plants employed 20,000 people: the roots of the present crisis trace back to the fact that Vickers grew fat and rich on the basis of a special relationship as weaponsmiths to the government. The infancy of Vickers was in Victorian entrepreneurship, but in its manly noon it knew little of market forces, or of competition. It lived in a settled world of Whitehall contracts, and was quietly pleased that its own hierarchy was comfortably interpenetrated with that of the Civil Service and Defence establishments (a managing director who formerly organised tank procurement at the Ministry of Supply; a director of finance who had been Second Secretary at the Treasury). The corporate structure which became a houshold word – Vickers-Armstrongs – came into existence through a suspension of the normal laws of capitalist gravity. In the twenties, William Armstrong's old company came to grief through an ill-judged attempt to diversify into Canadian paper-making: 'in the interests of the country' the Bank of England arranged a merger with Vickers.

It was characteristic of the British armaments industry in the boom-period before and during the war, to leave the tedious business of basic research and design to be done with taxpayers' money in official establishments or – especially in aircraft, a field in which Vickers gained much prestige through the purchase of the Spitfire builders, Supermarine. The industry was thus left free to concentrate on making money out of cost-plus contracts for large-scale production: theoretically, ten per cent, though one investigation showed that during the busy wartime days the profit-margin on a warship could creep up to 50 per cent and above.

Post-war conditions therefore found Vickers ill-prepared: demand for weapons fell, and those still in demand required larger and larger amounts of research. The company saw civil projects largely as fillers-in before the resurgence of good military times: an attitude which seemed to be justified when the Korean war broke out, putting Scotswood and Elswick back into armament work full-time.

Attempts were made at ploughshare-beating, but in desultory fashion. Some £100 was spent on a cement plant: manifestly insufficient to produce a saleable object. £1 m. worth of business for heating systems was just allowed to fade away. The decision was made to try to adapt the US Sherman tank as a heavy tractor for the building industry, whereupon the unhappy discovery was made that commercial tractors, not being expendable items, need tracks that will last about ten times as long as those on a tank.

The 1958 defence cuts produced a real chill, and in 1963 management consultants McKinseys were called in. They advised decentralisation into product-based divisions, diversification and introduction of budgets and profit targets. Sir Leslie Rowan, imported from the Treasury, declared that printing machinery, chemical engineering and office-equipment must be built up, and the commitment to heavy engineering and shipbuilding be reduced.

There was, of course, sense in this, both for Vickers and for Britain – except that Vickers went about it by means of gobbling-up other companies, rather than by a process of inter-

* S. Gomalka, in W. Beckerman (ed.), Britain's slow growth; causes and consequences. Forthcoming from Oxford.

'*Design and Development of Weapons:* History of the Second World War, HMSO.

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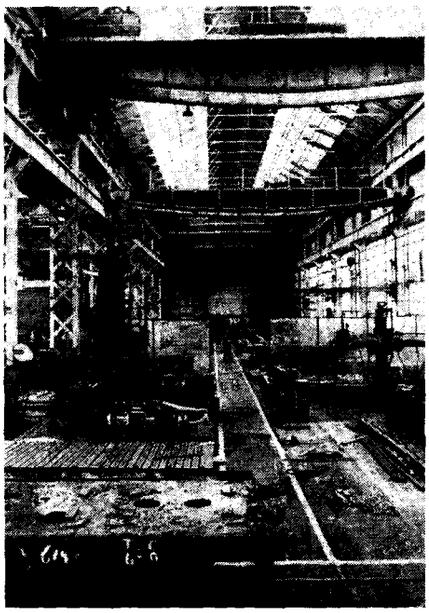

Laurie Sparham (IFL)

'Heavy engineering, like ship building, is leaving this country.' – Lord Robens last week.

The Scotswood joint shop steward's committee led by Peter Tolchard (third from left) discuss the closure. Over a third of the workers have been at Scotswood for more than 20 years.

Chris Davies

nal reform and organic growth. Decades of feeding at the public trough had made Vickers big, if nothing else, and between 1965 and 1970 the board were able to spend over £32 m. buying smaller firms. This was a period when Labour's policy naively *favoured* mergers, allowing giant firms to acquire a dominance here not paralleled in roughly-similar capitalist economies like Germany and America. Vickers became a good example of giantism: an essentially financial structure, seeking to extract profit from a gaggle of unrelated bits-and-pieces of industry.

THE STRATEGY, in its first incarnation, failed. Profits fell, and dividends stagnated. In Decenber 1963 there was a famous, unprecedented intervention: institutional shareholders led by Prudential Insurance, supported by the merchant bankers Hill Samuel, and backed by the Bank of England (in the nation's interests) demanded changes in the boardroom. This was applauded in the financial press as a long-awaited assertion of shareholder-democracy.

In 1970 Sir Peter Matthews was brought in from the British Steel Corporation as managing director, followed next year by Lord (Alf) Robens of National Coal Board fame. These two trusty denizens of the corporate state wasted no time getting down to business (at the NCB, of course, Robens had decimated the work-force with a vigour few pure capitalists have yet matched). Matthews abolished McKinseyesque decentralisation by bringing all investment decisions of more thn £30,000 back to head office: but principally what he did was pursue single-mindedly the trends begun by his predecessors.

Vickers went overseas. In 1968 sales by foreign subsidiaries were 2½ per cent of the business: today, they are nearly half. Exports, however, are still only ten per cent. During the same time, about 15,000 jobs have been lost from Vickers' traditional businesses – some 40 per cent of the workforce. Empty factories were treated as real-estate operations, and today one-third of Vickers' assets are in the property division, including the Vickers Tower, which is partly inhabited by government bureaucrats.

Financially, this is success. Pre-tax profits, at £38 million in 1976, have increased tenfold. Notably, half those profits came from Vickers' share in the government-backed British Aircraft Corporation, and Vickers' debts are larger relative to assets (property revaluations aside) than in 1968. But Matthews has produced what the City wanted: quick results. 'We have become', he says, 'a multi-disciplinary company, and our evolution will continue'.

Profits, as Tory politicians assure us, are required to make jobs. And of course this is true in the sense that investment can only be paid for by a surplus arising somewhere in society. But the Vickers story does not suggest that profits for any particular financial organisation necessarily make jobs anywhere. Resources have not been devoted to increasing productive capacity in engineering, finding new products, or finding new markets for old products. The profitable thing is to assume that no such task is possible: in the words of Lord Robens

> The plain facts are heavy engineering, jobbing engineering, is finishing as a trade in this country. (*Interview, BBC North-East* 13 February 1979.

There are countries, in Europe and elsewhere, where sophisticated heavy engineering is fighting not unsuccessfully for its life. So indeed are some British heavy engineering companies. But then, they do not have Lord Robens on their side. Before Robens, ten years ago, engineering accounted for over a third of Vickers' sales; today it accounts for about a fifth.

SCOTSWOOD DISPLAYS much evidence of Roben's philosophy. Roofs leak: there is no planned maintenance; one crane is sixty years old, and a whole building has been declared unsafe by the factory inspector. The annual intake of apprentices is down to – three. In 1960, the design department was 80-strong. Today, it is four. One 'rationalisation' was the removal of the designers to a centralised Vickers facility at Swindon: perhaps as neat a way as any of amputating the vitality of any engineering concern. (The UK has managed to halve the number of people working in mechanical engineering R & D inside a decade.) The Vickers' modifications entail hundreds of telexes between Tyneside and Berkshire. The Tyneside designers, justifiably, feel they have been relegated to 'a post office'.

The plant has had no product of its own since the unhappy Sherman tractor: it has been used chiefly to make things under foreign licence. Inevitably, therefore, Scotswood has had little control over its profit margins or the marketing of its products: indeed, it was only four years ago that a tiny marketing department was established, and its most recent report notes sadly that

> The steam locomotive market . . . vanished.

Markets, of course, rarely vanish overnight, and that one gave notice of departure which an intelligent management might have used to seek alternatives. Sir Peter Matthews, however, strikes the same note in describing Scotswood as a factory whose 'market has disappeared'. Yet, it was Vickers' head office who, in early 1978, responded to suggestions of diversification by saying that Scotswood's future lay in heavy engineering.

Defeatist unanimity among the top brass, may be due to the fact that anyone who felt otherwise got short shrift Product development researcher Jim Anderson wanted on the basis of 18 months research to spread into medium engineering, for example, refuse-recycling equipment, in which Scotswood has acquired expertise – admittedly under licence. Defeated, he, last summer, retired early. The plant's managing director, Alan Taylor, stuck to a £14m. renovation scheme for Scotswood based on heavy engineering which he had

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Local lad Alf makes good

ALF ROBENS used the North-East as a political launching-pad – he stood for Wansbeck (Northumberland) in 1945. His line, though, wasn't quite the present one. He thought that

> powerful vested interests would fight bitterly to retain the wealth and privilege which common ownership would end.

And he considered that the issue in the election was

> Is the country to be governed by monopolists or by the people? Under a Labour Government, private enterprise would take second place.

However, by 1951, as Minister for Labour, he deplored the 'rising trend of discontent' which allowed 'evilly-disposed men to foment trouble'. He moved from opposition into the chair of the National Coal Board, in which role he was responsible for cutting employment by 300,000, probably a British and European record. Apart from the NCB and Vickers, he has occupied positions near the top in many important organisations: the Bank of England, Times Newspapers, Johnson Matthey (bullion dealers), MCH Consultants, St Regis International (paper), and the Royal Commission on Trades Unions.

He observed in 1958 that strikes had become an 'anachronism' in the 'managerial society', shortly after which he became adviser on labour relations to Atomic Power Constructions Ltd (a consortium of four large corporations). In his own words:

> I am one of those fortunate people for whom a door has always opened every time I've looked around.

The corporate, managerial ideal has always appealed to him. He would, he once said, have become Prime Minister if he had stayed in politics, 'and the first thing I should have done was to run this country as a huge corporation – I see no other way to run this show except to treat it as a vast corporation'.

His name, of course, was frequently canvassed – by Cecil King and luminaries – as a potential member, or leader, of a brisk, no-nonsense businessmen's government. His remarks suggest there would have been no nonsense about democracy or consultation in Great Britain Ltd (A. Robens, Chairman), for as he said in 1973 he found the nice thing about private enterprise was that it was 'delightfully uncomplicated'

> When it comes to taking decisions, a small group of you sit down, decide what to do, and then do it.

In 1945, he asked whether Britain was to be run by 'monopolists, or by people'. Three decades later, he had made his own answer perfectly clear.

devised labelled Project Phoenix. Noel Davies who came in above Taylor began with assurances that there would be 'plenty of work' at Scotswood but it was soon clear by mid-'78 this was not the case.

Having pressed the management for explanation, the shop stewards were informed in September that the company might want to close Scotswood, transferring workforce and operations to Elswick. A mass meeting rejected this, against a background of mounting anxiety about Elswick's annual £2.5 million profit, which were known to rely heavily on government sub-contract work building Chieftain tanks for the Shah.

At a December meeting with the union, the management produced four options. It was 'extremely unlikely' that Phoenix could be justified. (Later, it became clear that Phoenix had in fact been ruled out eight months earlier.) A second, of keeping Scotswood going with minimal investment was 'not practical' because the buildings were so dilapidated. Third, there was a proposal for a scaled-down Phoenix, and fourth, there were two proposals for transfer to Elswick. No mention was made of the preferred option – closure – though a Tyneside MP, Bob Brown, who is a junior minister at Defence, had heard of this possibility from Vickers in November. The future of Scotswood, said the management, would depend on the unresolved question of future sales.

On 5 January, it was resolved. Vickers announced briefly that the factory would close, with 100 per cent redundancy. Noel Davies said that international competition and the fact that companies were doing work in house were to blame, and despite Vickers' £100 million nationalisation windfall, the preservation of Scotswood could endanger jobs elsewhere in Vickers.

HE HAS NOW produced accounts which purport to justify this decision. They show a 1977 trading loss of £850,000, principally due to lack of orders: on the basis of a 22 per cent increase in sales the 1978 loss was projected at £450,000. This was turned into an impressive £770,000 by adding interest due to the Vickers parent firm, and putting in a contribution to central expenses. If the Scotswood accounts are not overloaded, then it would appear that Vickers' central expenses are a fearsome £5.5 million, or one-quarter of group profits. (Should not the Bank of England step in again?)

Sales for this year were shown increasing again – oddly, in view of an earlier Davies assertion that half the work-force would shortly have nothing to do. Subsequent projections were more cautious, but still portrayed Scotswood with an operating surplus by 1982, before allowing for central interest and head-office charges.

The possibilities of staying at Scotswood with £8 million new investment, and of moving to Elswick with £5.5 million investment are also accounted for – and rejected as leading to five-year losses of £6-10 million. However, as these projections make no allowance at all for the new investment bringing higher production – and therefore lowering unit costs – it is hard to take them seriously.

These look like figures designed to prove closure inevitable, and it is not hard to see what Vickers might like to do with the Scotswood site. It has a jetty on the Tyne, is seven minutes from the motorway, and close to the airport and the Freightliners terminal. A property man would see it as a prime site in a prime position, and Vickers has already redeveloped 150,000 square feet of Tyneside factory as warehousing, as the 1977 annual report enthused:

> The rentals are above average for the area and only 30,000 sq. ft. remains to be let . . .

Our own calculations suggest that Vickers could expect to make a £1 million profit on redeveloping the Scotswood site as warehousing. This is based on the rents they are asking in their adjoining development, the cost of the adjoining development, adjusted for inflation and current property values. No allowance has been made for possible rent increases.

There will be no lack of space in tomorrow's Britain for storing the manufactures which nobody will recall how to make, and nobody will have the money to buy. Newcastle City Council have declared that they won't give planning permission for non-industrial use. But like any other property company, Vickers can wait to wear-down the determination of local politicians.

But the council has provided a useful £10,000 for the shop stewards' resistance campaign, and the workers have reached out for help to unusual networks – Stuart Holland, protagonist of Labour's abandoned industrial policy, a Community Development team, and Mary Kaldor of the Science Policy Research Unit at Sussex University to list just a few. But the basis of resistance is the stewards' combine committee: a development of unofficial trade unionism which adds to a long tradition, for it was at a Vickers factory on Tyneside that the term 'shop steward' was coined during the First World War.

During the fifties, attempts to build a combine and remove the barriers between the different unions in Vickers and between Vickers plants foundered on the resistance of the shipyard workers. When the Elswick convenor Jim Murray decided to try again in 1974, the financial and logistical difficulties had multiplied, for although Vickers had only half as big a workforce it had three times as many sites. And they were industrially polyglot: persuading office-equipment workers in Romford to make common cause with Tyneside engineers is not simple. Nonetheless, under Murray's chairmanship, the combine has spread out from the traditionally organised north-east engineers to cover three-quarters of the Vickers plants. Quarterly meetings in Leeds have so far concerned issues like sickness benefit, funeral leave, strikes for pay parity and small redundancies. Scotswood is the biggest challenge it has faced.

The combine's case against closure is presented on three levels: arguing that the social cost of more redundancies in Newcastle would be severe; that Vickers have been turning-away orders that might have preserved Scotswood's immediate viability; and that there is a list of alternative products which Scotswood could make over the long-term.

THE SOCIAL AUDIT, carried out by Newcastle City Planning Department is one of the most precise examinations of this kind yet produced. Inside a fortnight, 80 per cent of the Scotswood workers were interviewed, producing a calculation that the first year of closure would cost the public purse £1.8-2.4 million in lost tax, social security payouts and the like. Unemployment in West Newcastle already exceeds ten per cent: many of the Scotswood workers are over 50, and have skills similar to those already unemployed or about to be sacked in the shipyards. (Between 1964 and 1975, mechanical engineering employment in Newcastle fell by over a third. There are sixteen unemployed engineers for every vacancy. National media accounts of a shortage of skilled workers reads oddly in an area where there are 570 welders looking for work and *no* welding vacancies.)

The argument that the company has been turning away orders is documented in some detail by telex copies. The Jamaican harbour authority ordered a Paceco crane (made at Scotswood under licence) worth some

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£750,000. The Jamaicans withdrew because of a temporary cash shortage – but when they tried to revive the order, were met with refusal. Orders from Yugoslavia for ore crushers seem to have met a similar fate. In addition, Vickers decided against making Scotswood tender for £20 million of subcontracting on a Chinese order to Dowty for mining equipment. The reason given was that it involved large amounts of fabrication work, and was not suitable for the mix of skills available at Scotswood. But, as the figures cited earlier show, there is no shortage of Tyneside welders who would be glad of some fabrication work.

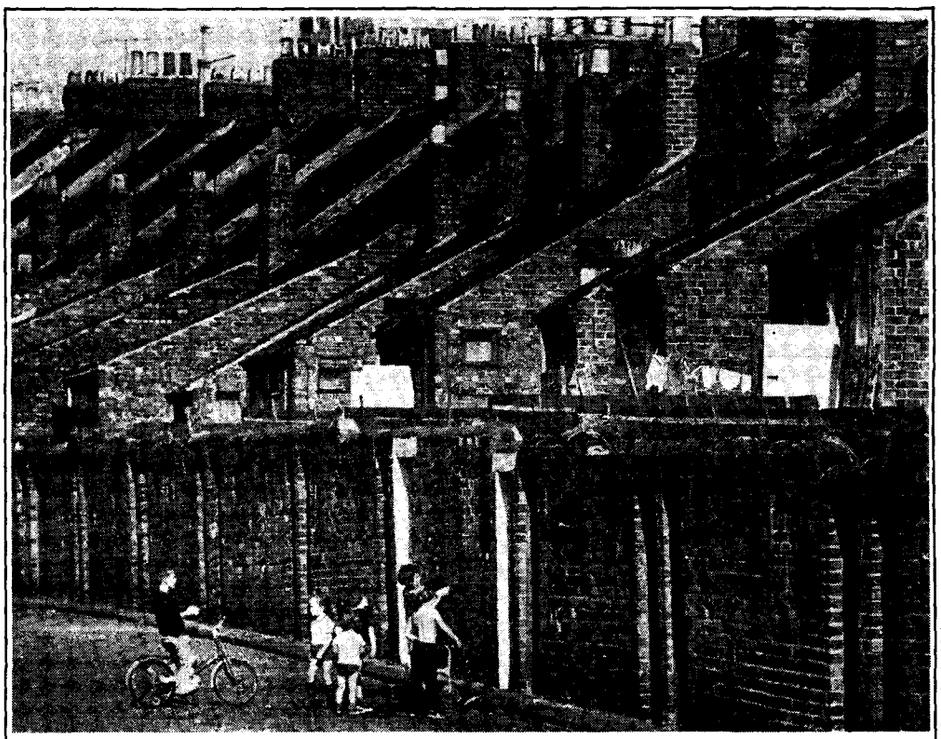
Naturally, the argument that there has been no commitment to develop new markets or products is closely-related. The combine asserts that Scotswood could produce new car presses, heavy earth-moving tractors, heat pumps, and fluidised-bed boilers (in which pulverised coal is burnt more efficiently by being made to behave like a liquid). Some of these are hazy formulations, but not all: for instance, the Logemann refuse-bailer, made under licence at Scotswood, is of acknowledged quality. Attempts have been made to sell it to municipalities as part of a refuse-recycling system: given the availability of government money for energy-conservation schemes, the prospects might be bright. But Vickers has taken the gloomy view that potential sales will be spread over 15 years.

Nor are the chiefs of Vickers optimistic about the chances of getting anything that might seep down to Scotswood from the £5 *billion* of orders that China is expected to place in Britain for steel-making, coal-mining, oil-drilling and exploration equipment.

These orders will go to specialist engineering firms, which will have to sub-contract some of the jobbing. Prima facie, it would seem odd if there were *no* contribution that a highly-experienced plant like Scotswood might make – especially as Vickers has made much of its record in exporting to China, and as Scotswood has already made a dynamometer for another of Dowty's Chinese orders.

Whatever Vickers may care to say about the supposed dereliction of Scotswood and its workers, it is based on an accounting which displays one rather glaring, and ironic, inconsistency. Last year, the plant whose closure Sir Peter Matthews now regards as 'in many ways, inevitable' received the Vickers group award for export performance. Other workers in the Vickers group may henceforth be a mite leery about such deadly tokens of corporate esteem.

TO REPEAT, Vickers is scarcely short of cash for backing adventurous projects. They are asking a total of £150 million in compensation for the nationalisation of shipbuilding and aircraft assets which were valued in the last accounts at £67.6 million: we find it hard to think the government will give them all that, but a guess of £100 million seems reasonable. The government has no powers whatever to tell Vickers board what to do with this stack of taxpayers' cash, and Vickers refuse to make any commitment, beyond telling their managers that they will be expected to make a thirty per cent return on it. So, if Sir Peter and Lord Robens decline to use any part of it – even in combination with several further millions of Treasury aid – to accede to the rather feeble official pleas that *something* should be done to save the export-award winners of Scotswood, there is (in the words of one locally-interested MP) 'bugger-all the government can do'.



'There's only one thing worse than being unemployed at 16 and that's still being unemployed at 17'. From a Youth Opportunities advertisement. What future for these kids?

Ray Smith (IFL)

On 31 January, the unions took their case to the Department of Industry, where Leslie Huckfield, as junior minister, told them that discussions over the future of Scotswood had been going on since 1977. Vickers had been told perfectly clearly, he said, that substantial government aid would be forthcoming if required for the Phoenix Plan. Indeed, an outline plan had been evolved, in which the National Enterprise Board would acquire 50 per cent of Scotswood. The idea was that the NEB would put up £4 million, the Department would put up £8 million, and Vickers themselves would invest £2 million. (The Industry Act states that nothing can be granted to a company which will not put up *anything* itself.)

This whole plan, the unions learned had entered a fatal decline in spring of *last year*, when Vickers made it clear that they didn't think the prospects made such an investment viable. Naturally, the better-informed workers were thoroughly amazed last week to hear Lord Robens saying – in the same interview, cited earlier, in which he obituarised British heavy engineering:

> I can assure you that no offer of any money or any suggestion of financial aid has come from the Department or the NEB. You have been fed a number of half-truths . . . either I am telling an untruth as I am sitting here or else someone else has told an untruth . . .

Presumably Lord Robens' talk-out is that nobody offered Vickers any money since Vickers didn't apply for any.

In some ways the issue is now marginal as Vickers say the trouble is not the lack of capital but a lack of customers. But the charge against Vickers is that they have made little attempt for years to find those customers, or find new markets to be served by the thousands of engineering workers they used to employ.

Huckfield also learnt something from the unions at the January meeting. Contrary to what Vickers claimed, there had not been full consultations with the unions over the closure of Scotswood. And the civil servants were dismayed to learn that Vickers had considered less-than-Phoenix plans for Scotswood – something which Vickers had withheld from DoI. Robens agreed to meet Huckfield again, whilst Vickers' spokesman informed enquirers that the closure would go ahead anyway. Nonetheless, discussions between the department and Vickers on some less ambitious plan have been resumed: the workers are not included in the talks.

The NEB are letting it be known that their interest has evaporated, but DoI officials, led by Mr Ken Binning, are furiously re-examining the market prospects for British engineering over the next few years. However, to give the business money the DoI have to be convinced that it will make a profit within three years. It can consider the social costs of the closure but is not allowed to finance a loss making company into the future on such grounds. It may be quite a tough proposition to re-establish within three years a business which has been run down for thirty.

Clearly there has been some alarm at the unexpected firmness of resistance from the steward's combine (another example, perhaps, of the monopoly union power which threatens the basis of our civilisation). The DoI are being forced to examine the Scotswood operation in much greater detail than they normally do. However, they are not out to attribute blame for the past and given their resources much of their information on future market prospects comes from Vickers – it seems unlikely that their assessment will be an independent one. Vickers are refusing to engage in tripartite discussions until they have completed their consultations with the Department, which is another way of saying to the unions: 'you can play too, but not until we have fixed the score in advance.' On this aspect of the Vickers' board's behaviour, at least, W. G. Armstrong would agree.

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Nationalism and the Windsor State

Tom Nairn argues the case for dismantling 'UKania'

Imagine a badger that does not know whether it is a badger or a brock, a creature that has no conception of itself; it is not surprising if in some circumstances it is thrown into fits of terror by its own tail. This was . . . the relationship the Kakanians had to each other, regarding themselves and one another with the panic and dismay of limbs hampering each other, united as they stood from being anything at all. Since the earth has existed no being has ever died for want of a name. All the same, this is what happened to the Austrian and Hungarian Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy: it perished of its own unutterability.

Robert Musil, The Man Without Qualities

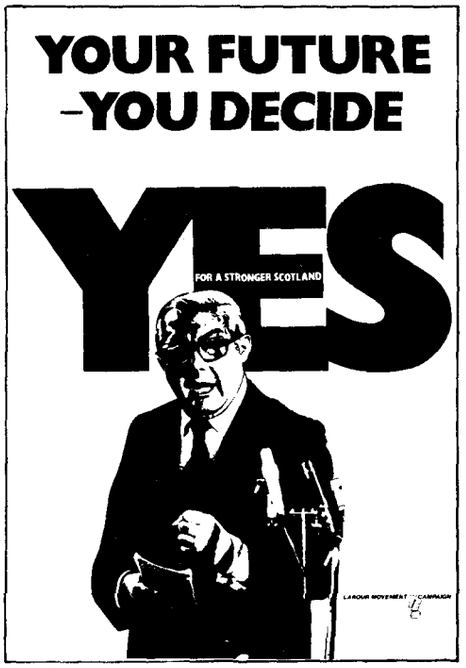
NEXT THURSDAY HM's Scottish and Welsh subjects are summoned to pronounce on Devolution Constitutionally, this has little to do with self-government It is the mystic bestowal on them of a brass-rubbing from the Westminster shrine: once reconsecrated in Westminster and Cardiff, it is supposed to bring the body of Sovereignty closer to the people But only if 40 per cent of them – not excluding the newly dead, the hung-over, the certifiable apoliticals, and those run over on their way to the urns – resolve not to say 'No' to the Royal gift

This scenario was not composed by the novelist Robert Musil This may be because he did not live in a state that had outrun the capacities of satirical imagination. Contemplating the mild evening of Hapsburg Austria-Hungary, how could he have foreseen the darker twilight of Harold Wilson's Honours List, or Michael Foot's speeches on the preservation of the Constitution?

Still, the Assemblies should not be judged only in terms of the motives behind them, or their mode of enactment Farce and mummery are their birthright as organs of the Windsor State But they arise, all the same, out of self-governing aspirations, in opposition to the old regime: something of that potential will remain attached to them Inevitably they are bastards, but that is their novelty and honour in old UKania, where legitimacy long ago strangled bourgeois radicalism and working-class socialism

Notoriously, many on the left remain hostile. Campaigns of refusal are promoted by socialists in Scotland and Wales, as well as by English MPs. The UK of course keeps numerous place-men, homagers and turn-spits in those countries: but they do not lead the 'No' chorus alone Good, un-blue-blooded men feel some disaster inherent in the break-up of Great Britain. The Assemblies have been designed to shore it up, but still – so the instinct goes – they may become hives of anti-British lunacy.

Three illusions combine towards this view of the problem: first, myopia about the nature of the UK state and ruling order. Though increasingly indefensible, this has deep roots: there were features of the Empire that encouraged a blurry insouciance about its essence, and haze remains thick on the periphery. The second, less specific to UKania, is the metropolitan or big-state notion of socialism: cherished by most



capital-city intelligentsias and extended through their university colonies This has always had unusual resonance in Britain, because of the especially crushing ascendancy of the South-East conurbation. Thirdly, there is the fear of self-government as 'nationalism' *in the Mr Hyde sense:* parochial madness, even fascism Though not a specially Britannic paranoia, it has remarkable force here when coupled to the other two ideas

IN THE HAPSBURGS' 'prison-house of peoples', where everything was *kaiserlich-königlich* (hence K-K, or Kakania), people spoke of 'Austria' Thus, wrote Musil,

> it was known by a name that it had, as a State, solemnly renounced by oath, while preserving it in all matters of sentiment, as a sign that feelings are just as important as constitutional law and that regulations are not the really serious things in life.

The same feelings know our own polity as 'England' Scottish antiquity chafes at the label, but all the same our Kingdom is united in the name, and much more than the name, of England

The 'England' of the nationalist debate isn't that spongy, boundless construction which Labour Ministers extol in their accounts of Cabinet Government It is the prosperous, thickly-populated command-structure of the South-East Everyone understands roughly where this golden ellipse lies, weighing on the British firmament It furnishes the UK elite, and nourishes the vital nerves of State The best television in the world and other cultural miracles emerge from it Lately, it has begun opening famous branches of the bureaucracy in Swansea and Dundee: a Kakanian form of decentralisation, showing indeed that regulations are not too serious

No comparable state has been so dominated by a metropolis. Like a dropsical head it looks over 'provinces' doomed to peculiar etiolation. Britain's abortive Industrial Revolution began in them and in the mineral belts of Scotland and Wales But as industry was consumed by Empire, the heartland took revenge Imperial loot consolidated its archaic social structure, generating a mass rentier mentality and a permanent imbalance in the Kingdom's capitalism Patrician and servile fused into a durable conservatism: around the holy acres of City and West End grew the colossal sub-metropolis of the Home Counties, a swollen and indeterminate town-country of privilege

The UK State is the voice of this parasitic agglomeration External conquests have vanished, but internal imperialism intensifies in decline. Long before Tony Benn complained, UK governments had lapsed into 'de-industrialisation' sacrificing the periphery except in time of war. After each war or tinsel boom these drained areas reappeared, and Labour's 'Regional Policy' of the sixties was the last pre-Devolution effort at therapy.

Placeless homogeneity is important to the old regime While tolerant of harmless aberrations like Scots Law, or the freak autonomy of the Channel Islands, the system refused dissident regional politics Regionalism and Radicalism were intimately allied, and both in damned bad taste But the cure was simple: get bounders like Joe Chamberlain and the Red Clydesiders into the Constitutional mainstream Most of that stream flows round and round within a mile or so of Waterloo Bridge, swiftly smoothing-off up-country pebbles They return to their people gravid with knowledge of How Much Is Being Done for them *in this small country of ours* The expression is beloved of South-Eastern oligarchs: it conveys the ideology of unification, of closeness and cohesion This is in truth the cohesion of a class and a state, but translated into the reigning myth as Consensus and Liberality No need for region competitiveness, or federal horse-trading, given the malleable beneficence of our presiding state

The last, astonishing evidence of this mythology's power is the anti-Devolution Left. Forced into compromise with her national minorities, old UKania could rely on something better than lackeys and lies: genuine socialists remain prostrate at her shrine. After Wilson, after Callaghan, they still clutch Labour's old version of the old Whig creed. They continue to believe in the great unitary takeover: tomorrow, the Caliphate will fall into the proper hands, enabling Rational Socialism to be centrally dispensed.

Regional agitation, therefore, is not an effort to inject fresh air into a moribund ascendancy, to unseat an unreformable Establishment by action from underneath. No: it is the will to destroy *this small country of ours* It is deviation from the highroad of British Socialism, a track for which HM's Labour Party furnishes the correct vehicle. We must stop these nationalist wreckers, so that we can in due course take over the Party: after which we shall take over *It,* Civil Service, Lord Goodman, Princeling and all.

Defection, of course, would spoil things because the UKanian Left relies on the periphery Scotland and Wales kept the Empire Liberal; now they keep in Labour – just. Left to itself, the South-East would already have

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buried England in post-imperialist reaction. Minority socialists, therefore, have a sacred duty to their heartland comrades.

The leaders of the 'No' factions are arch-provincial dupes, but they express an honourable anxiety which deserves principle answer. The answer is that they crucially mis-estimate the UK's political force-field. The South-East grows in strength, even within our common decline. It may hand out larger bribes, but essentially it feeds off our failure and passivity. There is not the remotest chance of the Scots and Welsh socialists doing *anything but* hold a faltering, deceptive balance, on the Parliamentary stage, against this tendency. Labourism will become ever more a pillar of the old state-order – as the present office-holders inexorably demonstrate – and still less a radical-provincial protest movement. The 'balance' conceals self-inflicted surrender – and, naturally, the worst conceivable betrayal of the English working-class. If we cannot break with Old Corruption in our own way, then Merseyside, Tyneside and the other prisoners are unlikely to do so.

BUTTRESSING THESE fantasies is a philosophy: socialism is only attainable in big countries. '*Other conditions being equal*, the class-conscious proletariat will always stand for the larger state'*, said Lenin. What 'other conditions'? Reflection will show that these conditions are never other than the course of modern history itself: inequality, uneven development, exploitation and its aftermath. Conditions are *never* equal: in capitalism, the large amalgamations are the exploiter-nations, broad-based parasites within which the social struggle is readily contained or purchased off.

These capitalists control not only factories and armies, but means of cultural production. It is amid the great libraries and colleges through journalism and polemic and electronic punditry that history is discerned: and this is the work of a metropolitan intelligentsia, defining itself by its distance from what Lenin called 'medieval particularism'. Its practitioners no longer feel themselves the spokesmen of a large, but still particular people – they have gained access to broader truths, more awesome values.

Great Britain has become a bit of a pensioner among imperialists. But her metropolis preserves this swollen-headed internationalism remarkably, aided by the connivance of the United States, and the world's capacity to learn English. English cultural and political life is a conspiracy against the feeling of being a small, increasingly embattled nationality. Our ethnicity, therefore, is belittled as a joke: anyway, the metropolitan intelligence sees itself as several notches nearer to abstract Humanity than the rough-hewn manikins of the periphery.

Hence its conviction that smaller nations can have no link with universal causes. Particularism stands in their way. 'Identity' is no philosophical concept to them, but an obsession running to blows, drunkenness, mass sentimentality. Buried in historical dross, what can they say about our common future?

Though socialists have succumbed to such chauvinism, there is nothing very Left about it. One of its great expressions is Lord Acton's 1862 *Essay on Nationality*. This right-wing Catholic Liberal saw Nationalism and Socialism as twin ogres, and Nationalism the worse,

whose course if unchecked would be

> marked with material as well as moral ruin, in order that a new invention (the nation state) may prevail over the works of God . . .

The United Kingdom and Austria-Hungary were ideals of civilisation, within which inferior races might be 'raised by living in political union with races intellectually superior'. Petty nation-states, he said, had no room for a sufficiently elaborate and rich class-structure, and lacked the hierarchies to generate stability. Lack of a 'broad basis' exposed them to vulgar egalitarianism.

The metropolitan-socialist version merely adjusts this slightly. Capitalism groped its way, by piecemeal experiment, towards its expansive, heroic age: it had no proto-bourgeois intelligentsia in the medieval universities to instruct it in the error of its ways. Socialism, by contrast, had been weighed-down with blueprints: for all its grandeur, the Enlightenment contained a pretentious hubris, transmitted to the modern Left as an over-certitude that it knows where it is going. In the remarks quoted earlier, Lenin imagined proletarian class-consciousness keeping time with the expansion of railways through the world. Socialism? No problem – all we need is a continent to apply the Plans in. Anything smaller would be a contradiction in terms.

The infamous lapse of Friedrich Engels in 1849 conveys the idea perfectly. Coming revolutionary war would

> smash this Slav Sonderbund and wipe out all these petty hidebound nations . . . The next world war will result in the disappearance from the face of the earth not only of revolutionary classes and dynasties, but also of entire reactionary peoples. And that too is a step forward . . .

After 130 years, world wars had affirmed these non-historical peoples. The ultra-despised South Slavs had made the most original, and so far the most durable experiment in socialist self-management. This reckless national self-assertion embraced, incidentally, a 'devolutionary' solution of Yugoslavia's old cobweb of minority-problems. Others of the 'Sonderbund' gang were less happy: when the Czechs and Slovaks became 'reckless' in 1968, their petty, hidebound socialism was crisply stunned. Socialism fused with small-folk nationalism had become, in any metropolitan view, the deadliest commodity in the world. Socialism's honour, however, largely depended on it.

SOCIALIST SERVANTS of the Raj consider themselves 'internationalists'. Travelling among the Hapsburg successor-states in the thirties, Rebecca West observed that 'Balkanisation', though qualified, was still a blessing, and that if there was

> an assurance in the Europe of our day that

*Critical Remarks on the National Question, 1913.

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> sometimes life goes well, a promise that some day it may go better, it is offered by these countries. (*Black Lamb & Grey Falcon*.)

But the Left especially in her metropolitan circle, while

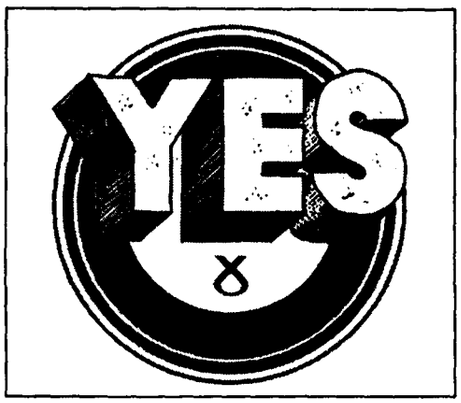
> professing to be benevolently concerned with the future of man, was not in the least exalted by the prospects of new-found freedom in Finland, Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia . . . (and) was sharply critical of the new states and all they did.

Equally shrewdly, she noted such bigotry to be uninformed to a point 'well below the general level' of those expressing it. The best of progressive friends could become a barking idiot on the spot.

The element of idiocy derives from an error so charged with vested interest that the deepest feelings stir when it is challenged. It is a truism of the world-view in question that nationalists act as egoists, while the metropolis thinks of everybody. 'True Austria *was* the whole world', explained Musil's character, Diotima.

The shortest political memory reminds us how fervently most of those anti-nationalists believe True Britain to be the whole world. They crusaded tirelessly to preserve UKania from European infection. The European Community is amongst other things the effort to make things equal, in a bit of the world at least, and so stay or control the antagonisms of development – which have underlain the savage side of nationality struggles. Against this, any great-nation chauvinism was justified. Socialists grabbed every scrap of vestment from the old Imperial wardrobe, amid ecstacies of higher-unity. The Common Market? – a petty, inward-looking consortium, too small for a state with the world at heart. Europe would halt the march to British socialism: worse, it would deprive the Third World of our unutterable off-shore beneficence, thus doing permanent injury to the World-Spirit.

All this has been brought to bear again, by the same unwitting lackeys of the old hegemony. What became of the UKanian heart of darkness? It beats still, in the staunch



rib-cages of Tam Dalyell, Neil Kinnock and their friends. Metropolitanism has always been found in its crassest form among its peripheral servants: aware from childhood of rebellious undercurrents, they easily turn into the sternest jailers, outdoing their masters in fidelity to yesterday's grand design. It has to be yesterday's: as so many pitiable episodes of the Devolution saga have shown, this is a mentality incapable of learning much from experience – not even the experience of what rulers want today. How many times lately has London tried to explain to these backwoodsmen that Devolution is now in their own best interest, as well as the state's!

'BALKANISATION' has not informed so much recent history by accident. It is not a departure from the mainstream of development. It *is* the mainstream – the mainstream of uneven, more or less antagonistic development, the only sort there is. For all its terrible risks it is still preferable to the only alternative: empires, and metropolitan hegemonies. Given our history, I would have thought it the obligation of every socialist in the British Isles to say: this is the Devil we *do* know, get Thee forever behind us.

Those who don't fail to understand – literally – the first thing about internationalism: that the ever-growing interconnectedness and mutual dependency of modern history calls for ever-greater political diversity, not less. They stick to the Grand Design, which We (in Vienna, London or Washington) understand, and They (narrow peripherals) strive to wreck.

Nationalists are often accused of being over-concerned with threats to a precarious identity. But there is 'identity' in the metropolitan culture, which exhibits panic, as Rebecca West noted, wherever regional affirmation appears. We peripherals are supposed to be emotional. But in my experience there is no-one more emotional than a metropolitan threatened with reduction to the ranks, with becoming just another national-human being like everyone else.

My arguments are themselves couched in semi-metropolitan perspective, because I have been trying to write for a mainly English readership. There are *general* reasons why they ought to welcome a more open, loose and competitive polity – where their own regions and the smaller countries take more initiatives, where they rely more upon themselves. But it would be dishonest to pretend that is all there is to it.

There are reasons, descending out of our 'medieval particularism' in Scotland and Wales, why some of us want autonomy or independence. We are nations, and I have said nothing at all about the arguments for nationalism which weigh so heavily with the national movements in these countries. Still, the reader would be well advised to add a large counter on one side of his private mental scales if he wants to grasp the whole force of such trends.

This does not anticipate easy victory on 1 March. The old apathy, the old faith, and the national nihilism of our *chiens de garde* may cause a temporary setback. If so, they (and their owners) should try to restrain their myopic barks of triumph. They will be crying against wind and tide. The old barque will run more swiftly towards its final straits, and the inheritors gather more resolutely on the shore.

LAW

Denning deals another blow

Jennie Horne writes: A vital test case on trade union recognition passed almost unnoticed last month. On 17 January the Court of Appeal under Lord Denning declared null and void a decision taken last October by the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service. ACAS had ruled that the non-TUC affiliated union UKAPE (United Kingdom Association of Professional Engineers) should not be recognised by the engineering firm W. H. Allen and Company Limited.

The decision is one more landmark in the war of attrition being waged by the courts on trade union rights. What is particularly disturbing about it is that it ignores a major area of discretion conferred upon ACAS by Parliament.

The 1975 Employment Protection Act laid down ACAS's terms of reference – which are to promote the improvement of industrial relations, to encourage the extension of collective bargaining and to encourage the development (and, where necessary, reform) of collective bargaining *Machinery*. The Act states that when a recognition issue is referred to ACAS, the Service should examine it, consult all parties it considers will be affected by the outcome of the issue and make 'such inquiries as it thinks fit'. It should ascertain the opinions of the workers to whom the issue relates 'by any means it thinks fit' and if it decides to take a ballot, certain provisions should apply to ensure that the ballot is secret and fair.

ACAS therefore has wide discretion in matters relating to trade union recognition. However, this has increasingly been eroded by the courts – particularly in the Grunwick case and now, just as seriously, in the UKAPE case.

In the Grunwick case, the Court of Appeal drove a coach and horses through ACAS's discretionary powers on balloting: it reversed the ruling of the Lord Chief Justice that workers' views should be determined by ACAS 'as far as reasonably practicable', and declared instead that *all* workers *must* be consulted. In the UKAPE case, Lord Denning stated that ACAS derogated from its duty to have regard 'in particular to the extension of collective bargaining'. In doing so he disregarded the fact that ACAS has an important duty not only to extend collective bargaining *per se*, but also to encourage the machinery by which collective bargaining is carried out.

When ACAS decided that it would not be appropriate for UKAPE to be recognised at W. H. Allen, it did so in the light of views expressed by the Engineering Employers' Federation, the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, and the employees at the company. ACAS also bore in mind the fact that AUEW (TASS) had been representing the relevant group of workers for decades and that both employers and unions thought that it would be disruptive to introduce another union:

> Any recommendation for the recognition of a trade union at W. H. Allen must be consistent with the established collective bargaining arrangements in the Company and industry.

In other words, in seeking to prevent strife, to promote good industrial relations and to safeguard existing collective bargaining machinery which had worked successfully to date, ACAS was acting within its statutory discretion.

Remarkably, the UKAPE decision of Court of Appeal seems to have contradicted one aspect of the House of Lords' judgement in the Grunwick case. For while the Law Lords upheld Denning's view that the strikers' union APEX should not be recognised at Grunwick, Lord Diplock and two others (a majority) made it clear that it was for ACAS, not the Court, to decide what weight to give to the opinions of the workers, once those opinions had been gathered satisfactorily.

It is worth noting, too, that when Denning made his pronouncement in the UKAPE case about ACAS derogating from its duty to have regard 'in particular to the extension of collective bargaining', he was *not* supported in that view by the other two Appeal Court judges: it was, in fact, on a technicality that they agreed the ACAS ruling should be declared null and void. The press lost no time reporting Denning's damaging remarks, but did not bother to register that small, though significant fact.

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SPAIN
Julie Flint

The Socialist Party will have to wait

Spaniards move to the Right

When Spain celebrated its first free elections in 41 years in June 1977, just 19 months after the death of Franco, the four national parties that made it to Parliament had one thing in common: a determination to hustle in on the centre, shrinking from the entrenched positions of the 1936-39 Civil War.

Communists fought for respectability with the slogan 'Communism is Socialism.' Socialist leader, Felipe Gonzalez folded his party's Marxist flag quietly in a corner and tried to distance himself from the party of La Pasionaria by replying, a little inadequately: 'Communism is Communism and Socialism is Socialism'. Prime Minister Adolfo Suarez, whose party congress gave a rapturous hand to Margaret Thatcher, boldy baptised his new coalition *Union de Centro Democratico*. Former Franco minister Manuel Fraga stripped off his jacket to lunge bodily into hecklers, a problem he never had under Franco, and further added to the confusion by proclaiming incorrectly: 'The Centre is ours.'

Going down the line to Spain's second post-Franco elections on 1 March, the total number of parties running has been reduced from 157 to 43 but the big four who held 324 of the 350 seats in the old Parliament are still shuffling around. This time, however, the common factor is a shift to the Right, following the mood of voters disturbed by political violence and unemployment that even by conservative official reckoning passed the one million mark in a labour force of 13 million many months ago.

In tune with the new mood, Suarez had fielded conservative candidates to fight for the capital. The Socialists' campaign posters, which in June 1977 shouted 'Socialism is Liberty', now make no mention of Socialism and instead pledge 'firm government'. The communists want only one nationalisation: nuclear energy. *Coalition Democratica*, a new Fraga-led alliance, calls itself 'the moderate progressive Right', defender of a united Spain and a united family without abortion, divorce or cheap imitations of Playboy.

All this dodging about does not appear to be paying dividends with Spaniards unenthusiastically awaiting their fourth national ballot, including referenda, in 28 months. With moderation narrowing the differences among the programmes of the top three parties – UCD, Socialists and, far behind, Communists – some polls show more voters undecided now than at the start of the campaign on 7 February. Worse: neither Suarez' UCD, with 166 seats in the last Chamber of Deputies, nor Felipe Gonzalez' Spanish Socialist Workers Party, or (PSOE), with 122, appears to be making enough headway to win an outright majority and it looks virtually certain that Spain will be forced to tackle 1979 with a minority or coalition government – probably led by the 46-year-old Suarez.

Although some polls indicate that the Socialists have a small edge over Suarez, although the party of 37-year-old Felipe Gonzalez is the only party to have increased its campaign budget over 1977, and although Suarez is putting on the least convincing performance of his life, a Government win on 1 March still looks the more likely outcome of the election race. Despite a brutal increase in terrorism, tripled since Franco's death, Suarez has been the man who took Spain to democracy – right through from the legalisation of political parties and trade unions to approval of a new constitution last December – without making any major mistakes. He has shown he can handle the right-wing police and armed forces, backed by a strong personal relationship with King Juan Carlos, Franco's chosen successor and commander-in-chief of the military, and, on the evidence of 1977, can count on a majority of the 30-40 per cent of Spaniards whose votes were undecided at the start of the campaign. More controversially, he has used the Prime Minister's office to block, until 3 April this year, municipal elections expected to increase socialist power in most Spanish towns.

Last but not least, and certainly not to his honour, the Prime Minister has the unique advantage of Spanish television – a state-run monopoly which, in the first half of the campaign, gave Government candidates 97.5 per cent of its news space, Communists one per cent, *Coalition Democratica* 0.6 per cent and Socialists a degrading 0.5 per cent. Although the daily *El Pais* delegated a reporter to count every second – or minute, in the UCD's case – it can have done little to redress the balance: while most Spaniards have televisons, only 93 in every thousand read a newspaper.

If Suarez does get pipped at the post, it may simply be that he started too late – perhaps lulled into a false sense of security after winning the 1977 elections without campaigning at all. Given the closeness of the polls, and his own record of 100 deaths in political violence last year, Suarez has conducted a surprisingly flat campaign. While Felipe scheduled a bruising four-five meetings daily, Suarez let the first week of the campaign slip by without making a single appearance, apparently resting on the laurels of a campaign-eve announcement that the French government will no longer let Basque guerrillas live in the French Basque country as political refugees. Polls, however, agree that unemployment is the biggest issue among voters, with terrorism a long stretch behind. Spaniards have grown shamefully accustomed to the daily drip of political violence, which has already taken 25 lives this year.

When he did finally leave his office in the Moncloa Palace, the Prime Minister said, as Prime Ministers must, that he hoped for an outright majority at the polls but immediately indicated, with an uncharacteristic lack of aplomb, that he really didn't expect to get one.

If Suarez falls, his political future may break up with his party for, unlike the 100-year-old PSOE, the UCD is not a cohesive party with a strong ideology and infrastructure but rather, as *El Pais* commented unkindly, a 'clear-water mirror where its supreme and undisputed leader can see his own reflection.'

Formed on the eve of the 1977 elections to give a name and otherwise missing unity to the Prime Minister's men, the UCD gave a public display of its own weaknesses at its first congress last October. Although, delegates overwhelmingly approved Suarez leadership, more than one-third abstained or cast blank ballots in votes for the party's top officers, indicating a criticism of party management boding ill for the day when the party is no longer united around the attractions, and demands, of power.

Even if Suarez wins, his troubles will not be over – unless, as looks most improbable, he wins more than 175 seats. Although Felipe has closed no doors, other socialist leaders have indicated they will oppose coalition with the UCD, well aware that their move to the Right is already costing them votes to the Communists. (With no credible right-wing alternative to Suarez, time is on the socialists' side.) Suarez has already all but ruled out an alliance with regional groups and made clear he is personally extremely disinclined to go to bed with Fraga – whose 16 seats in the last Parliament could have formed a narrow, Centre-Right majority. Instead, he has floated the idea of a one-party minority government with external support in Parliament and, in the end, he may have no other choice.

Whatever the outcome of the elections, it looks almost certain that extremist parties not legalised in 1977 will get home this year, splintering Parliament even further. While the Communists may succeed in keeping rivals to their Left out, the ultra-Right, capitalising on terrorism and Fraga's late start in uniting the Right, will probably win a seat or two in Madrid, returning to Parliament for the first time since their master's voice fell silent and reaching a peak they are unlikely to climb again.

More fear of frilly nighties

Anna Coote writes: When Tony Benn launched the Energy Department's independent offshore safety inquiry there were no serious hitches until the Shell oil company discovered the measurements of ASTMS's National Safety Officer. The eight-member inquiry team (consisting of civil servants, academics and trade union representatives) had been invited by Shell to inspect two of its platforms in the Brent oilfield, north of Shetland. On the day fixed for the visit, ASTMS representative Roger Lyons was due to be on leave, so it was agreed that he should send his deputy team member. The name of ASTMS's Safety Officer, one S. McKechnie, was duly forwarded to Shell.

Next, the company asked for the measurements of all members of the team, in order to kit them out with suitable clothing. A worried phone call came through to Lyons: Shell had spotted the unmanly dimensions of the Safety Officer. Was it . . . could it be . . . a *woman*? Why yes, replied Lyons, nonplussed. But women are banned from the rigs, he was told; the men wouldn't like it, their wives wouldn't like it. What if the weather got so bad that they had to stay on the rig *all through the night*? (Shell's extraordinary fears of this were documented in the NEW STATESMAN last week.) Furious, Lyons threatened to resign from the inquiry team. And of course, because this is Britain, a compromise was reached: on 11 March the team would visit the more southerly Auk field from which a safe return within 12 hours could almost be guaranteed. The visit to the Brent rigs would be postponed until the summer, when Mr Lyons would be able to make the trip in person. ASTMS are still wondering how to tackle Shell's appallingly discriminatory policy towards women in industry.

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London Diary

☐ What a pity the Queen couldn't get to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, until Sunday. If only she'd managed it by Friday, she could have joined hundreds of people in the city's Justice Square (*sic*) for what the Saudi Press Agency described as 'the public amputation of the right hand of an Iraqi who had been convicted of theft'. No anaesthetic was applied (as in namby-pamby Pakistan). Saudi crimonologists are quick to assure critics that this system of punishment is fool-proof. A hand, once cut off, can never steal again, just as a woman, once stoned to death, can never again commit adultery.

The occasion might have awakened in the Queen a yearning for the good old days of the Hanoverian dynasty before Kings and Queens had to kow-tow to the mob, when anyone who stole anything was strung up on a gibbet. And after the amputation ceremony what would have been more suitable than an oration from Foreign Secretary David Owen who accompanied the Queen's retinue on this grovelling mission? Dr Owen could have offered his thanks to God that – with the Shah gone – someone at least is upholding law and order, not to say Western values, in the Middle East.

☐ Amazing scenes in the House of Commons on 29 January during a speech by Esmond Bulmer, Tory MP for Kidderminster. MPs sobbed and rent their hair as Mr Bulmer spelled out the awful agony of 'medium-sized family companies' like his own struggling in the vice of price restraint. In a peroration which brought loud and prolonged cheering from all sides, Mr Bulmer said of the government and its price control: 'Most people are fed up with these double standards'.

Mr Bulmer is group planning director of a well-known Herefordshire cider company. In July 1977 the company changed its name from H. P. Bulmer Ltd to H. P. Bulmer (Holdings) Ltd. This radical reconstruction convinced the Treasury that Bulmers was now a new company, and therefore free from dividend control. Bulmers promptly trebled their dividend (3.1p a share to 9.1p). The dividend on the 836,000 shares which belonged to the Hon Member for Double Standards leapt by approximately £50,000.

☐ Schoolboy soccer heroes are ageless, so I was shocked to read that Stan Mortensen, the greatest inside forward in the whole history of the world, (just as Frank Swift was the greatest goalkeeper and Billy Wright the greatest half back), is 57. More than that, he has been convicted of illegal betting in a Blackpool club. Hundreds of people have written to me asking to correct the *Daily Telegraph* report of the case, which quoted fellow-accused Gary Macdonnel as saying:

> It is not some sleazy back-road thieves' den. I have seen an ex-Mayor of Blackpool in the club placing bets.

Due, probably, to lack of an industrial dispute the word 'not' has been wrongly included. The sentence should of course read:

> It is some sleazy back-road den. I have seen an ex-Mayor of Blackpool in the club placing bets.

☐ Reading Sir Keith Joseph's big speech in the House of Commons last week I was struck again by the force of his argument that market forces, when released, reward the profit-makers and punish the loss-makers. There was a good example of what Sir Keith means in the figures last week from Birmid Qualcast, a large engineering firm in the Midlands which is run almost exclusively by Sir Keith Joseph fans. Things didn't go too well at Birmid last year, and the shareholders really had to pay for it as the figures prove:

	£m 1976-77	£m 1977-78
Profit after tax:	**9,270**	**2,231**
Dividends paid out:	**2,938**	**3,280**

☐ 'The death of Edward Kardelj' says a *Guardian* leader on 18 February 'deprives Yugoslavia of the last great leader (Tito excepted) of the Yugoslav peoples' successful struggle against Hitler'.

It does not. Thanks to Robert Kee and the Blessed Broadcasting Corporation, I have been lucky enough to fly to Belgrade to meet another: Milovan Djilas. Djilas was, after Tito, perhaps the most outstanding of all the Yugoslav Communist leaders, out of power and in it. He was the leading theorist during the Yugoslav government's breach with Stalin in 1948. He denounced Russia as 'state capitalist' and realised soon afterwards that the description applied just as accurately to Yugoslavia. So he broke with Tito and the Communist Party and denounced them all as a 'new class', for which crime he went to prison for many years.

Before I arrived, I was suspicious of him. His dissidence, I knew, had been used to squalid advantage by some very right wing groups indeed, including the Greek colonels. I also expected a rather stern disciplinarian. Instead I found a delightful, rather diffident old man, a bit startled to be challenged in the revolutionary socialist language which he himself had used so passionately, before and during the war.

Whilst I ranted away through the broadcast, I kept looking up to find his eyes smiling at me in recognition, and in disillusionment. He insists he is not disillusioned, but of course he is. The awful course of what is preposterously called Communism in Russia and Eastern Europe has sapped his passion for change, and with it his zest for life. Before I left him, I found myself begging him to stop writing short stories and to finish his autobiography, which already runs into three glorious volumes, and only takes us up to 1943.

I really *want* to read his account of the 1948 split, which would certainly be better-written and better-informed than anyone else's. For the moment I have a copy of his *Memoirs of a Revolutionary* signed by the author with the inscription:

> To Paul Foot: thanks for good discussion and his idealism. Belgrade, January 1979.

It is priceless, and is not for sale.

☐ The *Star*, Victor Matthews' new patriotic newspaper was terribly proud of some very old pictures of Myra Hindley with which the paper was launched in London last week. The pictures were labelled 'exclusive' though they had to be shared with the *Star*'s sister paper, the *Daily Express*.

There was, however, a problem for both papers. The pictures represented Myra Hindley as a human being. This was clearly intolerable, since, as far as newspapers are concerned, Myra Hindley is not a human being at all, but a she-wolf. The matter was corrected by some 'journalism', of which I cite Richard Wright's article in the *Daily Express* as a choice specimen:

> The never-before-seen picture was taken secretly in Holloway Jail where Hindley is serving a life sentence . . .'

Well, she is in Durham Jail, but let that pass.

> Hindley has worked hard and painfully on her new face. The nose for instance, is the result of plastic surgery which Hindley underwent after she persuaded one of her lesbian lovers to smash her face into a prison wall.

The chief difficulty about this version is that the pictures were taken before Myra Hindley's nose was broken. And how *was* her nose broken? On Sunday, 26 September 1976, the *News of the World* published a shockhorror rehash of the Moors murder story, with special shockhorror revelations about Myra Hindley who had then been in prison for ten years.

The article was read by Josie O'Dwyer, a prisoner of rather a stormy temperament, who was a hater, not a lover, of Myra Hindley. She shouted round the whole wing that she was going to 'kill that Hindley bastard'. She then attacked Myra Hindley in a passage, beating and kicking her until she was pulled off by other prisoners. Myra Hindley's nose was broken, a cartilage was badly torn and several teeth were loosened or smashed. If you want to know how such a murderous attack can be blamed on its victim, you can write to:

> Mr Richard Wright, or Mr Victor Matthews, Comment is Sacred, Facts are Free Department, *Daily Express*, London.

Paul Foot

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ The vicar who conducted a memorial service for Cambridge's best-known drunk yesterday answered the protests which followed the service at his church. 'One is never surprised at a lack of charity,' said the Rev. James Owen, vicar of St Mary the Less. Among those at the service for Trevor Hughes, who died of a heart-attack, were a police superintendent, college officials, local businessmen and market stallholders. Also present was Mr John Hales-Tooke, a local solicitor, who said: 'Beneath everything Trevor was a Christian and he once gave me the most perfect definition of Christian life – unfortunately it was some years ago and I have mislaid the piece of paper upon which it was written. During the odd moments he was not in liquor I have had very deep and profound conversations with Trevor.' – *Daily Telegraph* (Lindsay Mackie)

☐ Horrible experience for Lord Hailsham on the M1 the other day. He was mooned at by a carload of youths. 'I was flabbergasted,' he told me. 'There was this huge pair of buttocks exposed before me. It stayed there all the way up to London. Obviously he didn't realise who I am.' – *Evening Standard* (Joan Spira)

☐ At a time when we all wish we could live elsewhere, bachelor Earl Jermyn, 24-year-old heir of the racy Marquis of Bristol, has quit Britain to protect his £5 million fortune. 'He's terribly sad,' said Roger Lane-Smith, his solicitor. 'After all, he has given everything up. It is going to be very hard for him to start with, but he does know a few people in the South of France.' – *Daily Mail* (David Shipman)

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LETTERS to the EDITOR

Bully beef

Sir, May I correct some of the errors contained in your article about Garners Steak Houses (NS 26 January)? You state that '84 workers stopped work on 26th January 1978'. The facts are that 44 workers stopped work on that date and were duly dismissed. A further 16 who failed to turn up for work during that day or subsequently were also dismissed; but so far as we know they have had nothing to do with the TGWU, nor did that various claim they joined when they communicated with the company later in the year.

You also stated that the present industrial action backed by the TGWU eventually involved '140 of Garners' 160 waiters, kitchen and bar staff' who joined that union and then sought recognition. The true facts of the situation are, however, that during the first ten days of February 1978 Gallup Polls carried out a complete independent survey of opinion amongst both existing and former employees which established that, even counting those who had been dismissed, less than a third of our workforce wished to be represented by the TGWU; and if the ex-employees were excluded, that only 16 per cent favoured TGWU recognition. When these views were rechecked in a second Gallup Poll conducted last December, a similar opinion against various recognition was again registered by our employees.

So far as your reported allegations about long hours, low wages and a 70 hour compulsory week are concerned, all I would say is that your information is incorrect – as anyone working in our restaurants can easily testify.

C. MARGOLIS

Garners Steak Houses
25-26 Gerrard Street, London W1

Bradford's experiment

Sir, For those of your readers who collect examples of personal malice, Mr Boyles's letter (NS 19 January) will no doubt take an honoured place in their scrap books. Many people *do* know Eric Robinson and even more have visited Bradford College and presumably have learnt something about it in the process. The College does not claim that it 'has the answer to the chaos and confusion of the present scene in Further and Higher Education'. What it does claim is that, in a remarkable short time, it has achieved a sense of identity and purpose.

There is in any academic institution a democratic committee structure, usually headed by the Academic Board or some similar body. What Eric Robinson did was to ensure that this committee structure was fully developed and did its job. Of course the Academic Board sometimes arrives at decisions that are disagreeable to Mr Boyles, just as it sometimes reaches decisions that are disagreeable to me and doubtless many other people. That is the nature of the democratic process as I understand it.

May I finally comment on Mr Boyles's reference to Higher Education in the College. Many of us who work here and have previously taught in schools and colleges of education, believe that, in spite of the problems occasioned by the re-organisation of teacher training, our present Dip. H.E./B.Ed. programme provides a better course of education and training for intending teachers than was available five years ago. It has, as its major intention, the preparation of men and women to meet the educational problems created in the schools by our multi-racial society. I believe that no other B.Ed. course can claim such a serious commitment. I can only believe that a later reference to a report by the Head of the School of Education to his Advisory Committee is mischievous. The report refers in glowing terms to the quality and achievement of students taking B.Ed. degrees.

D. A. DARBY

School of Combined Studies
Bradford College
Yorkshire

Sacred or free?

Sir, Christopher Hitchens can fight his own battles. The battle your reader H. C. Mullin wants (Letters 9 February) is best left unfought. A naked confrontation between the unions and the press lords could only jeopardise free speech and democracy. That said, the way some papers have used that freedom to inflame and polarise public opinion isn't exactly good news for democracy, either. Much of the recent strike coverage, as Lord Widgery said about something else, has verged on the reckless.

Newspapers have viewpoints and these largely govern the choice and presentation of what goes into their columns. But the best criterion of the sense of responsibility with which this is done remains Scott on objective reporting, free comment, and the distinction between them. What seems to be happening is that certain newspaper owners are going all out to exploit and sensationalise emotive issues like law-and-order and union power in a bid both to beat Labour in the election and each other in a circulation war which is getting as rough as anything since the Thirties. In the process, Scott has gone out of the window.

Any journalist can read the signs: stories which dramatise effects and ignore causes, facts and quotes all marshalled to fly in one direction, like a bomber stream, the systematic use of headlines to pass loaded comment on, not merely summarise, the news items under them. Perhaps it's too much to ask for a Press Council with the powers and inclination to do its job. Some strikers may have a good case and others no case, but it's clear they are not the only people who need to learn codes of practice and discipline.

IVAN ROWAN

28 Elm Park Gardens
London SW10

Sir, Christopher Hitchens may well be right in his opinion of the *Daily Mail* (NS 2 February) but his last sentence can't go unchallenged. He concludes that 'Toryism and honest journalism just don't mix.' How can he then explain the desolate gap left by the demise of *The Times* and the *Sunday Times*? Tory, honest – and apparently irreplaceable.

Such a thoughtless generalisation tends to invalidate Mr Hitchens's entire investigation of the *Mail*. That's journalism.

PENELOPE MORTIMER

113 Broadhurst Gardens
London NW6

Rescuing the economy

Sir, Professor Beckerman's belief (NS 2 February) that the tax-based incomes policy 'component of the package provides a method by which an incomes policy can be operated without in any way depriving trade union leaders of their treasured rôle of bargaining and negotiating' cannot be viewed as a serious analysis of our processes of collective bargaining. Trade union officers bargain and negotiate as the only practical way of representing the interests and tackling the many problems their members face at the workplace. Besides, no union negotiator would be so naïve or so stupid to spend pointless hours, weeks or months negotiating a settlement which would be subject to a tax clawback, leaving the worker no better. Negotiation would cease while the problems festered as a monument to the 'economic logic' of a tax-based incomes policy.

If the administrative problems could be overcome, the control of incomes through such a policy might be sound theoretically though it would require a permanence if it was to avoid creating more anomalies than it would cure. Like all other attempts at a permanent policy, however, it would not overcome the fundamental objection that existing inequalities would be compounded if social justice was not established as a prior condition.

Historical experience, moreover, points to the difficulties, in both the public and private sector, that any Relativities Board would encounter in coping permanently with the many problems caused by changes in technology, demand pattern or international distortions, in a society where supply and demand matter more than justice.

Full marks for the conversion to import controls, but I am afraid a lot more homework is required on incomes.

D. J. HENDERSON

General & Municipal Workers Union
4 Park Gate, Glasgow

CORRECTION: Two misprints crept into Fred Halliday's article on Iran (NS 5 January): the reference to the state's receipts in 'secular trade' should have read 'secular tax', and the Bahai sect should have been described as 'heretical' and not 'fanatical'. The latter error is particularly unfortunate, as the Bahai are the least fanatical of believers, a sort of Islamic quaker sect, with the associated quietism of that trend.

Non omnia possumus omnes

Sir, Why *must* people use Latin when they've forgotten the grammar and can't be bothered to look it up? Julian Barnes (NS 26 January) writes *custodies* for guardians. Before Christmas someone (was it J.B. again?) gave us *afflati*. What can we expect next? *Censi? Consensi? Tractati logico-philosophici?*

P. O'R. SMILEY

Masters' Common Room
Ampleforth College, York

Sir, Why isn't Julian Barnes doing something solid and really useful like running the country instead of wasting his time, though not ours, in publishing TV criticism? I've never read anything quite like it for sheer wit and exact social, aesthetic and moral standards – like some unholy alliance between Kenneth Tynan and Mme Gilliat at their best. Until Downing Street or the Foreign Office calls him to higher office I'll continue to enjoy Mr Barnes's criticism.

BRYAN ROBERTSON

73 Barnsbury Street
London N1

The blank generation

Sir, I was glad to see the NEW STATESMAN showing a little interest in the likely complexion of the Labour Party after the next General Election even if it is only for your Mr Patrick Wintour to misquote me (NS 16 February). What I wrote (in the *Evening Standard*) was: 'One by one, the 1945 generation of *London* Labour MPs die or retire and in every case the replacement is a Leftist' – italics added for the benefit of sloppy readers. This is undeniable. Mr Wintour himself instances three such Leftists adopted for safe Labour seats in London – Stuart Holland, Reg Race and Ernie Roberts. Outside London, the Left does not seem to have made so much headway, and I never claimed that it had. But it would be surprising if the capital did not give some kind of lead to the provinces.

FERDINAND MOUNT

The Spectator
56 Doughty Street
London WC1

Patrick Wintour writes: I was giving the *Spectator*'s Mr Mount the benefit of the doubt by not taking him literally since only two London Labour MPs who entered the House in 1945 are being replaced at the end of this parliament's life – Michael Stewart representing Fulham and David Weitzman of Hackney North. Even in this 'every case' of two, one of the successors is not a leftist: Mr Stewart is being replaced by the impeccably centrist Barry Stead. Unless Mr Mount was making some arcane point about political shifts in the London Labour Party in the Sixties' in a piece about 'Marxist infiltration' of the Labour Party now, I conclude he has done some sloppy research.

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FIRST PERSON
Arthur Marshall

In The Picture

As a really ardent film-goer with sixty-three years of devoted attendance and several million feet of celluloid behind me, I have never quite been able to decide which oft-repeated film cliché has been my very top favourite. I greatly enjoy the one in which a small mixed party of whiter than white British big game hunters is marooned somewhere among hostile natives and in dense jungle territory (in cheaper films the jungle was unmistakably Richmond Park, but never mind). War drums have been distantly thudding but these have now died away and the leader of the group, Colonel Merridew, narrows his eyes and says 'I don't like this silence'. Then, after a dusky head with what looks like an indelible pencil horizontally through its nose, has suddenly popped up from behind a bush, the fuzzy-wuzzies attack and the leading lady is swept up and carried off, still wearing her solar topee and waggling her legs up and down at high speed to register both anxiety and displeasure. She never, and how dramatically exciting it would have been, went into the cooking-pot to form the tasty main *plat* (*gigot de Mrs Merridew aux herbes*) for a black banquet, but there, you can't have everything.

Then there is the cliché when the hero, escaping from a rascally gang of international crooks (thin black moustaches and yellow faces much to the fore), goes flying down corridors and through windows and over roofs and eventually bursts through a door that leads to freedom, only to find that he has blundered by mistake into the central den itself of these arch-fiends, one of whom then steps forward (quite often it was Conrad Veidt) and says suavely 'Ah, come in, my dear Mr Henderson, ve haf been vaitink for you.' And then there are those innumerable poker games that end in, to put it mildly, displays of bad temper with the table overturned and guns blazing and everybody as cross as cross and a frightful old toothless pappy going 'Yippee' with excitement. For these disturbances we are usually in a remote saloon bar in some such outlandish spot as Broken Gibbet Gulch, a stone's throw from that, in films, constantly-named aquatic feature, the Sweet Water Canal (can there somewhere be, I ask myself, a Smelly Water Canal?).

Hitherto several things in life that were common knowledge to others, and poker games in particular, have been a complete mystery to me, never having known or bothered to find out whether two kings were better than an ace and three tens, or whatever. Not that such paltry hands ever appeared much in films. There, as far as one was allowed to see what they were holding, the better gamblers often seemed to have come by five aces, which surely can't be right.

Perceptive readers (and which NS subscriber is not?) will have pounced on that word I used, 'hitherto', and will perhaps have started to ask themselves whether I now know the rules of poker, whether I have actually started to play, and whence comes, so late in the day, this fresh blossoming, this new and sophisticated life-style. I shall, in due course and as is my way, explain all but let me first say that I have never been absolutely clear in my mind as to the actual meaning of 'sophisticated'. Perhaps you will help me to judge from the following incident. Many years ago, when staying in the South of France and at a time when that coastline was at the very height of its chic (more than I was), I was taken one day to a lunch party. I can never incidentally, get either my tongue or my pen happily round that word 'luncheon'. It makes me sound pretentious (do those who make use of the handy word 'brunch' ever, I wonder, think of it as being Bruncheon?). To name some of my fellow guests at this gathering would seem boastful and so I will suppress them. We were about thirty strong, and partly French.

Our hostess was a titled lady of considerable charm, distinction and wealth. It was high summer with the temperature in the eighties but her staff (the lady herself must have been consulted but can hardly have been very intimately concerned with such mundane matters) had arranged for us to sit at tables for four in bright sunlight on a shadeless terrace and there eat, unbelievable but true, piping hot veal rissoles nestling in a rich gravy and flanked by mashed potatoes, the dishes being handed to us by liveried footmen wearing white gloves. Struggling with the food, the rivers of sweat and the frog conversation (*'Aimez-vous Nice?'*), I looked about for our hostess, only to find that she was not among those present, having left fairly briskly, I was later told, for a different and obviously more agreeable lunch party further along the coast. This way of going on seemed very smart and dashing at the time, but was the lady's behaviour sophisticated or just plain bad manners? My dictionary says that 'sophisticated' includes 'qualities produced by special knowledge'. Well, she certainly had special and prior knowledge of those rissoles.

And it is special knowledge of a wide variety of subjects, poker included, that I am now pretty strong on. It comes from a book eagerly snapped up at, of all things, a Highgate jumble sale. Its owner can only have let it go in a blind moment of madness, or perhaps he had died, for it provides, for those males with ambitious but timorously shuffling social steps such as mine, a splendid passport to the *beau monde*. Here, surely, sits sophistication. Take, for instance, the book's first half, called, quite simply, 'Man About Town' and wafting us timewise straight back into a Wooster world. Riffling excitedly through the packed pages, I come instantly upon a thrilling paragraph entitled 'Tying a Hunting Stock'. Well, we can all dream, can't we, and there I am at once, in the mind's eye, all correctly kitted out for the shires and up on Moonbeam, with a 'Tally-ho' here and a 'Mornin', Lady Di' there and the centre of attraction as we, see how expert I am, draw the spinneys (one recalls those pre-war hunting reports in the *Times* and a memorable line which went 'Hounds found in Wriggly Bottom').

But despite this new fluency in the things that really matter, I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that one of my main difficulties is going to be how to get all the assorted technical lingo out with the correct air of authority and without, for such is my irreverent nature, a shy smile or two. There is also a grave risk of being seriously misunderstood and being considered to be dirty-minded. For example, in the Shooting section, the author paints a graphic verbal picture for the reader of a 'gun' (meaning one who fires a gun) in a covert shoot waiting tensely as the beaters' sticks come tapping their way through the trees towards him and 'tall' (by which we mean high, in the non-culinary sense) birds start coming over – pheasants, apparently, and of both sexes. What to do for the best (and here the sensitive must look away for a line or two)? 'You pull on a magnificent cock,' it says 'with your gun practically vertical.' This sort of phrase is, understandably, well beyond fastidious old me, and readers would certainly not wish me to risk myself further, but I have been able to work out that it means that you shoot at a male bird.

When not busily reminding me that trout fishing begins on March 1st, that The Oaks is run on the first Friday in June, that White's Club was established in 1693, that 1947 was a tip-top year for port, claret, burgundy and almost any other booze that you may care to name, my splendid book (*The Man's Book*, edited in 1958 by Colin Willock: keep your eyes peeled for it) is very informative about clothes and being, as some say, faultlessly groomed and 'whether or not to dress up or down to your personality'. Here's a teaser. If your personality is on the forceful side, it says that it's best to dress down in order 'to give an air of modesty'. Shy violets should, on the other hand, choose their fanciest suitings in order not to be ignored. As regards my own personality requirements, I shall just press quietly on with my grey off-the-peg uncrushable from the dear old Army and Navy Stores. At my time of life, whether this dresses me up or dresses me down is neither here nor there.

Roger Woddis

Top and Bottom

'Trade union power has passed from the leaders to shop-stewards and shop-floor power.' – Sir Harold Wilson, Financial Weekly.

It's the fellows on the floor,
The fellows on the floor,
The rank-and-file whom I revile
For always wanting more.
Instead of love for those above,
The gods they should adore,
They demonstrate their boundless hate
By showing them the door.

It's the leaders at the top,
The leaders at the top,
The chosen few who see things through
And work until they drop,
Who understand we're overmanned
With women in the shop,
And how to fine a picket-line,
And when to call a cop.

It's the ones with eyes to see,
The ones with eyes to see,
The hungry sheep who'd fall asleep,
If Jim were on TV.
But can you guess who'd solve the mess,
If only he were free?
You don't know who? Well, here's a clue –
It's me, it's me, it's me.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Neal Ascherson

At Checkpoint Charlie

The Ides of August: The Berlin Wall Crisis of 1961 by CURTIS CATE *Weidenfeld* £8.95

Did the Western Powers know in advance that the Wall was to be built? Certainly there were many Berliners who afterwards felt certain that the West had been tipped off by the Russians that, on or about 13 August 1961, the East Germans would seal off West Berlin and physically divide the city in two. It was hard, otherwise, to understand the feeble Allied reaction in the first days. The United States, Britain and France must already have assured the Soviet Union in principle that they would not treat the division of the city as a *casus belli*. It was known that Marshall Koniev had sent for the Western military liaison officers at Zossen a little earlier. That, perhaps, was the moment when the discreet hints were exchanged.

Curtis Cate's long, angry, anecdotal book about the Wall crisis brings back to mind all these rumours. He doesn't believe there was foreknowledge. But I wonder. Such matters and intentions could not have been directly conveyed; the Western Allies would not have accepted any proposal for a unilateral change in the city's four-power status. It is much harder to accept that the West did not have any idea of what was to come.

The East German population was flooding across the open border at a steeply increasing rate which would eventually threaten the survival of the German Democratic Republic, while Khrushchev was setting deadlines for signing a separate peace treaty with the GDR. Everyone knew something was going to happen. According to Cate, the West expected that Ulbricht might seal off the rural border where West Berlin meets the GDR, or even draw a barrier right round greater Berlin, but not that he would run a wall through the centre of the city. And yet this was the only effective action which Ulbricht could take, and it's clear, even from Cate's book, that the Berlin population feared just that. Given the almost comical profusion of spies on both sides, it is hard to believe that the Western Allies did not have intelligence tidings of what Ulbricht intended, if only through the immensely elaborate logistic preparations which went on. It would be sensible to guess that they did know what was afoot, though perhaps not the date, and that after discussing the implications agreed that they should not take physical action to prevent it.

When it happened, their reaction was lethargic. Macmillan went to the grouse moors and stayed there, famously observing that it was all 'got up by the press'. Kennedy was at sea on his way to a picnic when the boat was recalled so that he could be told the news; he agreed that the closing of the sector border was a threat to the East Berliners rather than to the Allied position in the city, and stayed on at Hyannis Port. Dean Rusk (who once said, 'It's wonderful to deal with the British; it's like putting on an old shoe!') remained imperturbable. Adenauer stayed in Bonn. The allied commandants did not meet until ten the next morning, and spent the day discarding one solution after another until they were reduced to drafting a feeble statement. Then Rusk, from Washington, forbade them to issue any statement at all, and they gave up for the day.

There was, however, and there still is a strongly hawkish school of thought among Americans which believes that something could and should have been done. Cate on the whole belongs to this school. Another member, extensively quoted here, is the formidable James O'Donnell, intelligence man, political adviser and journalist, who more than anyone except General Lucius Clay stood for an aggressively anti-Communist policy in the 'bastion of liberty'. But just what was to be done? Western troops and tanks could have advanced and overthrown the barriers, made only of wire in the first days. But as O'Donnell was told in Washington, the East Germans would merely have re-erected them further back, so that if the Western forces advanced further they would be unilaterally invading the Soviet sector – a far worse violation of the four-power agreements.

When it was their own status that was at stake, the Western reaction was quite different. At the second peak of the crisis, in October, the East Germans decreed that all Allied personnel save officers in uniform must show their papers to the Volkspolizei at Checkpoint Charlie. This led straight to the muzzle-to-muzzle confrontation of American and Soviet tanks at the checkpoint; American troops went marching with fixed bayonets into the Soviet sector to escort their civilian officials across East Berlin. The affair was not really as dangerous as it looked on film, but Khrushchev recognised the Americans' determination and conceded the point.

Cate believes that weakness in the face of Communism (by which he often means negotiation) never pays. To him, American 'weakness' over the Berlin Blockade (their failure to punch an armoured train through to the city) led Stalin to unleash the Korean War two years later. Similarly, America's 'mouse-like reaction to the challenge of August 13 . . . was to lead to the Cuban missile crisis'. His book is not just a political narrative, but an industrious reprinting of minutely-detailed refugee stories and escape recollections from those first weeks. Badly as he re-writes them, these are terrible stories, and it will never be right to affect a cold 'realism' about the mutilation of a living community in Berlin, the suffering and loneliness which the division imposed for so many years. But they don't justify his political judgments, even if they justify his anger.

The last Berlin crisis, which began in 1958 and ended with the building of the Wall, was the most dangerous moment in the post-war history of Europe. It was concerned with two things: the possibility that East Germany might either collapse or be somehow undermined diplomatically, and the Soviet wish to get the Western military presence out of Berlin. The building of the Wall resolved both these questions simultaneously, and Western statesmen reacted with more or less concealed relief because they recognised that. The brutal sealing of the frontier made possible the rapid economic growth and stabilisation of the GDR. The possibility of German reunification in neutrality or otherwise was ended for this generation, and so was the danger – even more worrying to the West – that East Germany would collapse into rebellion and a conflict into which the Federal Republic would be drawn. The physical dividing of Berlin, so that East Berlin could develop behind its wall into the capital of the GDR, also signified that the Soviet Union had settled for a second-best Berlin solution, isolating the Western Allies in a barricaded enclave rather than trying seriously to evict them altogether.

The GDR regime was certainly the winner by these events. But was the West therefore the loser, unless one argues – as perhaps Cate would – that German reunification was really possible on Western terms? Certainly the West was presented with a propaganda victory which is still beyond price. O'Donnell was told in the State Department in August 1961 that the revelation that the GDR could not retain its population without a wall was 'in effect a major setback and defeat for Communism'. He retorted that failure to remove the barrier would 'shake German confidence in Uncle Sam', and rattle Nato to its foundations. The years since then, with their millions of macabre package tours to the 'Schandmauer', have given the State Department the best of that argument.

Cate leaves a lot out. He doesn't tell us about the longer effects of the Wall: the advance of the GDR; or the sullen West Berlin decade which followed, as the population failed to admit that the lights had been switched off on the international stage of 'Frontstadt Berlin'; or the indirectly connected student insurrection of the late Sixties. He never admits that the Western Allies were in Germany not only to hold back communism but to hold down any uncontrollable re-emergence of German statehood. But one splendid thing he does put in: the full account of LBJ's vice-presidential visit to reassure the Berliners that America cared. The demands for honeydew melons and for mistresses, the royal command that Willi Brandt should summon the leading china- and shoe-shop managers on a Sunday to offer their wares at a chicken dinner in the Hilton roof restaurant, the orgy of tearful emotion at the Rathaus, finally the scene of LBJ snapping to attention hand on heart, because he thought that 'Berliner Luft' was the West Berlin national anthem . . . Well, they were great days in their way. Now the great city peacefully declines, neither threatened nor honoured.

Among this week's contributors:

NEAL ASCHERSON worked for some years as an *Observer* correspondent in Central Europe. He is at present writing on Scottish politics for the *Scotsman*.

JOHN JONES is the present Professor of Poetry at Oxford.

PHILLIP WHITEHEAD, MP for Derby North, produced *This Week* from 1967–70.

PATRICIA CRAIG is co-author of *Women and Children First: The Fiction of Two World Wars*.

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Russell Davies

Public Enemy Number One

Illness as Metaphor by SUSAN SONTAG *Allen Lane* £3.95

Among the many names the English language maintains in order to describe states of less-than-well being – and it takes a considerable virtuoso in nuance to distinguish accurately between an ailment and a complaint, a malady and a disorder, an affliction, an infirmity and a condition – 'disease' has become much the most potent. It is a dirty, social word, increasingly burdened with loathing. To be 'diseased' is to harbour something infinitely more reprehensible than mere illness. Illness is what we all have to suffer, individually, from time to time; but Disease is the name of the Public Enemy we all have in common. It is the thing that civilisation is committed to fight against, ever more exasperatedly as the number of resistant types slowly decreases.

And of course the disease that resists best, seeming to thrive on our detestation of its virulence, its unpredictable outbreak offensively defying our impulse to organise and control, is cancer. This is the Disease par excellence; the infiltration of the human organism (our cherished orderliness) by an alternative and dissolvent form of life, the anti-science, the very being of uncertainty. The malignant tumour, unconsidered until it is suddenly sitting there, is a reminder to us that we do not yet, and possibly never will, control our destiny. 'For the more sophisticated', as Susan Sontag elaborates the point (and 'for the more specifically paranoid', she might have added), 'cancer signifies the rebellion of the injured ecosphere: Nature taking revenge on a wicked technocratic world.'

But the purpose of Miss Sontag's remarkably stimulating and sometimes confusing little book (adjectives all explained by the fact that these writings were once a course of lectures) is to plead for moral neutrality in the consideration of illness. Our thinking about it, she insists, must not be infected by imagery.

> My point is that illness is not a metaphor, and that the most truthful way of regarding illness – and the healthiest way of being ill – is the one most purified of . . . metaphoric thinking.

In demonstrating this, she concentrates on two diseases she considers to have been 'spectacularly encumbered by the trappings of metaphor': cancer itself, and tuberculosis.

Sure enough, when one thinks about these morbid conditions, it does not come naturally to designate either of them as that neutral thing, an 'Illness'. Cancer, as we have seen, is universally traduced as a Disease, socially stigmatised even though uncontagious; while it takes no great knowledge of Romantic and Victorian literature to establish the conviction that TB was once widely sentimentalised into – the abundant language suggests another category – a 'Sickness'. A sickness is a damp thing, all humours and mucus and perspiration, with a tinge of melancholia added. A man who is 'sick', unless he is in America where the word is more robustly versatile, is suspected of being at least partially 'sick at heart' and quite possibly in head as well. (The modern 'sickness' – in fact the consumption de nos jours – is alcoholism.)

TB was the Public Enemy of the 19th century, unmistakeably a Disease; yet the public mind preferred to soften it into a sickness. Both the Romantics, with their appetite for self-dramatisation, and the Victorian meliorists, with their craving for moral uplift (and consequent capacity for humbug), were able to look upon TB as a process of ultimate spiritual refinement, a kind of finishing school in religiosity for exhausted, over-generous spirits. Dickens, naturally, was in at the heart of this, and Miss Sontag discovers him asserting (in *Nicholas Nickleby*) that

> the struggle between soul and body is so gradual, quiet, and solemn, and the result so sure, that day by day, and grain by grain, the mortal part wastes and withers away, so that the spirit grows light and sanguine with its lightening load . . .

Although the modern sceptical eye sees here chiefly a poor disguise for the nastiness of bodily disintegration, it can still discern a genuinely powerful desire of the 19th-century artist and his public to squeeze something positive out of their miserable incapacity to understand this disease: indeed, to exalt their incomprehension into spiritual victory. Thus a bafflement in pathology is strenuously blended into the enigma of death itself.

Now the 20th century has gone quite a long way in the other direction, but perhaps not quite as far as Miss Sontag fears. The impulse to elevate and transfigure has died away, to be replaced by a tendency to blame. Modern science abhors mystery, it being by definition that which resists research; so it looks round for a scapegoat – a role for which the patient himself, since Freud, has often seemed to be volunteering. Thus, as Miss Sontag observes in the most triumphantly neat portion of her argument,

> As once TB was thought to come from too much passion, afflicting the reckless and sensual, today many people believe that cancer is a disease of insufficient passion, afflicting those who are sexually repressed, inhibited, unspontaneous, incapable of expressing anger. These seemingly opposite diagnoses are actually not so different versions of the same view . . .

– being, you see, psychologising 'accounts' of disease.

I would be as happy with the appropriateness of this argument as with the elegance of its construction if only I knew more of the many people who apparently look upon cancer in this way. Certainly there is a tendency among diagnosticians at the moment, as I know to my cost, to see the brain as the inventor rather than the registrar of bodily pain. But I suspect that scarcely anybody, in this country at least, has yet been persuaded to view the onset of cancer as a deterministic outbreak of self-criticism. Far more prevalent, in my experience, is a mood of resignation and fatalism as we await the isolation of what are (again, in my experience) universally expected to be external and physical causes. In this ugly meantime, cancer is a horrible lottery, the very lack of a pattern in its choice of victims being its most dreadful characteristic.

So perhaps Miss Sontag's central, crusading point – that it is just as foolish to tell a man he is being killed by his own personality as it was once fond and hypocritical to portray TB deaths in terms of sanctified vaporisation – is made a little in advance of the establishment of the pernicious illusion she fears. Whoever does call serious illness an extension of the imprisoned will has found a crafty way of flattering the will into accepting the burden of guilt; but we are not, most of us, all that easily fooled so far. The metaphor may well be put to us, mind you, more insidiously than we expect. The kind of image Dickens was dealing in had the virtue of obviousness; it was a bourgeois-literary fantasy of a morbid state. But psychology, the latter-day literary branch of medicine, clothes its new metaphors in authoritative jargon. It claims not merely to be a palliative interpretation of the externals of the disease, but an intimate part of the diagnostic effort. Yet it will be finally revealed, Miss Sontag declares, as only a new and more unpleasant disguise for ignorance.

What Miss Sontag thus leaves cancer patients to think about during their dying days is a crueller question. There is small comfort in having no one to blame. Miss Sontag herself, like all intelligent and responsible people, will have considered what she would do in the circumstances. I have a paradoxical feeling she would end up well couched in comforting metaphorical illusion. For does she not open her whole argument with a particularly lush one of her own devising? 'Illness', she writes,

> is the night-side of life, a more onerous citizenship. Everyone who is born holds dual citizenship, in the kingdom of the well and in the kingdom of the sick . . .

This, I believe, is redolent of the habit of mind she is out to attack: it is not even true. Freedom from any citizenship – the precarious self-sufficiency of statelessness – might be said to be the only good thing about illness. If Miss Sontag has never been ill enough to feel this, I am glad; I wish her well.

THE NEGLIGENT DAUGHTER

Edith de Born

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Francis King, The Spectator

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Phillip Whitehead

Duopoly

The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, Vol. IV: Sound and Vision by ASA BRIGGS *Oxford* £25

For the whole of the first post-war decade of the BBC the imminent end of its monopoly cast a long shadow. It dominates the fourth volume of Professor Briggs's massive and reverent work, but not to the exclusion of anything else. For this is a history that tells you everything you ever wanted to know about the BBC, and then some more. Which overseas service was the first to broadcast the news of the death of King George VI, how were announcers told to pronounce Sowerby during the 1950 election, who took part in the egg-and-spoon race on the last day of entertainment programmes from Ally Pally . . . ? It is all here, at an excessive price – a fourfold increase since the last volume appeared in 1970.

The major questions of broadcasting in post-war Britain concern the nature of its role and the pace of its development. What changes were there in the ethic of the Corporation, and in its relationship with governments? How widely did it trawl for new talents and fresh opinions? Did it appreciate the potential of its television services in time? These questions lead inexorably to the breaking of the monopoly. Was it inevitable, and could there have been an alternative with a greater public service element than the eventual compromise solution achieved, if the Beveridge Committee had gone differently? When competition came, the BBC was ready for it. Was its improved style in the middle Fifties the result of the competitive stimulus, or was it coming anyway with a new generation of producers, and in areas previously ignored by most broadcasting historians – sports presentation, for instance?

In answering these questions Briggs gives a vivid description of a self-confident elite, where the ideal of entertainment, as well as education and information, was the proper province of Sir William Haley (and the very name of his rock-and-roll namesake provoked a deep shudder). These were the years when the BBC took on its 'Auntie' image. It is all very different now; and yet the Corporation of today, with the alteration of broadcasting structures once more in the air, is still recognisably the same creature.

Haley's BBC was high-minded and conformist. It knew what it meant by the national interest, whether in its abashed response for having dared allow the leaders of the unofficial dock strike to 'make statements' in 1947, in its portrayal of the British policy position for its overseas audiences, or in the self-censorship of its drama output. In the long anguished arguments about broadcasts by unbelievers Haley insisted that the Corporation's highest duty – to search for truth – was conditioned by its context: a medium 'as potent and all-pervading, and as undiscriminating' as broadcasting. Controversy 'shall not wound reasonable people or transgress the bounds of courtesy and good taste'. We must remember the temper of the times. Mrs Margaret Knight's broadcasts in 1955 on 'the Humanist point of view' produced a press outcry, and a senile outburst from the Prime Minister about this 'clumsy misuse of robot machinery'. In politics Briggs shows that after the war it was Haley himself who insisted on the 14-day rule being retained, whereby the broadcasters could not tackle any subject due to be debated in Parliament during the next fortnight. Only under his successor did the BBC stir itself against this ludicrous imposition.

In radio, the mighty trinity of Home, Light, and Third edified the nation, with only Radio Luxembourg for competition. The emphasis was on improvement. 'Maybe in a few years' time the Light Programme will be where the Home Service is now and the Home will have passed on to other standards,' Haley told the General Advisory Council. The three services were planned to be in a kind of regulated competition with each other, though this was soon abandoned. If we smile at the Third's 'unwarranted musical snobbery' in refusing to broadcast anything so trivial as *Finlandia* we should remember that during this period the BBC could count the *number* of Dvorak symphonies broadcast on the Light Programme. As the audience for the Third Programme fell, only a self-confident monopoly could have encouraged its audience-research department to concentrate on the qualitative, the intensity of the response, however few had responded. In the work of Gilliam's Features Depart-

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ment, and in the best of drama and light entertainment too, this was still the golden age of wireless.

It was not, however, even the bronze age of television. That infant service was starved of resources and imagination. Haley saw fit to leave it in the satrapate of the Director of the Spoken Word. The men who later broke the monopoly, like Collins and Ian Orr-Ewing, have left their multifarious memoranda, asking for proper resources, to argue for them. There was no Director of Television until 1950, and when appointed he was not the obvious candidate, Norman Collins, but George Barnes. The Director of the Spoken Word reigned over television. Tahu Hole, the amazing New Zealander who believed that only print was fit to be news, inhibited the development of television news from his position as Head of News Division. In the circumstances it is surprising that the free spirits of Alexandra Palace like Michael Balkwill and Grace Wyndham Goldie achieved as much as they did.

When the Beveridge Committee sat in judgment it was bound to be concerned above all else with the use of the monopoly, though the BBC tried to play down the issue. Even before the war ended, voices – notably the *Economist* and a former Director General, Ogilvie – had argued persuasively against the monopoly. In evidence to Beveridge both the Fabians and the Liberals had put the case for pluralism: a number of outlets, including the totally neglected local broadcasting station, instead of one. Beveridge muffed it. He appears in these pages as a silly billy, quite unfitted to be Chairman and occasionally carried away by petty feuds of his own. The role demands an ability to stand up to the big battalions on the big issues, and to carry your committee with you. Beveridge did neither. Selwyn Lloyd's minority report was ultimately to have more influence, while on one issue – the limited use of advertising by the BBC – Beveridge himself was in the minority. In the Parliamentary debates of 1952 and 1954, therefore, opponents of both monopoly and the commercial alternative could find no ammunition in Beveridge's recommendation. A young MP called Wedgwood Benn was almost the only advocate of separate corporations for the BBC's services in the 1952 debates in which Lord Reith's apocalyptic contrast between the brute force of monopoly and the bubonic plague of commerce set new standards of hyperbole.

Professor Briggs can offer a balanced view, a quarter of a century later, of the final break-up of the monopoly. The Tory government was dragged into it unwillingly, but the forces in favour emerge here as far stronger than the tightly-knit group of economically-motivated men favoured by legend. Some were influenced by their own experience in working for the BBC, others by the overwhelming argument of principle against monopoly, however high-minded the monopolists. The BBC's fall-back positions, Plans I-VI, all reproduced here, were intolerable to the Corporation unless allowed any second service to be under its control. So the public services alternative never got a look in. It was decided that a public service authority should oversee the commercial service. The duopoly was born.

Was the BBC ready for it? It was, and in a wider sense than the timely despatch of Grace Archer on ITV's opening night. The service was changing fast. The men and women of the Sixties were coming into post. New styles were being developed in areas far from controversy. *Sportsview* matters as much to such a development of the BBC as does *Panorama*, and by the late Fifties men like Paul Fox were moving easily between them. The great comedy-writing teams were at the peak of their early success, and it was this predominance in comedy and sport that would see the BBC through the first assault of what was always referred to austerely as 'the competition'. If there is an omission in this massive book, perhaps it is the failure to give any of the classic scripts the extended quotation given to each and every memorandum from Sir William Haley. In the next volume of this history Vox Pop will have to take over somewhat from Vox Deo. In a rare flash of humour (I laughed only three times in more than a thousand pages) Lord Briggs tells us of two BBC executives dutifully listening in to the first sermon broadcast in Welsh. They 'understood only two words in the sermon Gandhi and Mickey Mouse. They did not know why these characters were included'. Many such centurions of the public service stand by to be overwhelmed at their post in the next volume. I hope Lord Briggs has the stamina to write it.

John Jones

Wild Strawberries

Turgenev: His Life and Times by LEONARD SCHAPIRO *Oxford* £12.50

Turgenev was one of those sad men who like telling people how happy they are – 'as happy as trout in a clear stream when the sun strikes it'. He's not telling lies to cheer himself up. He's telling the truth. But it comes across as sad. We somehow know better than he does; it's as if those 'happy' trout had tipped us the wink behind his back. The sun may shine but there are pike around. Turgenev was a sweet and mild and very vulnerable man harried by nasty aggressive individuals like Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. Equally he was the victim of group opinion. Here the classic instance is his novel *Fathers and Children* and its reception by the radicals and reactionaries of the Sixties. Both sides hammered it and him. The reasonable man and his eminently civilised book were caught between fanatical extremists, drawing the fire of both sides.

Of course his sadness goes back much further than that. One recalls his mother, a monster of cruelty and caprice. And yet she had a good library which he fed off; and she could be perceptive. She praised his first slim volume because 'your *Parasha*, your story, your poem, smells of wild strawberries'. Good for the monster! That just about sums up Turgenev the writer. As with trout, so with strawberries. There's no particular reason why wild strawberries should smell sad, but his do. This is the right approach to his tragic pastoral – Liza's green world, those lime trees, those flowers on Bazarov's grave, 'observing us serenely with innocent eyes'.

Leonard Schapiro is a biographer first, a social, cultural and political historian second, and a man of letters very much third. Others have written useful critical essays. Eva Kagan-Kans's *Hamlet and Don Quixote* and V. S. Pritchett's *Gentle Barbarian* (don't be put off by the title) are outstanding. But this is the first full-length study in English to exploit the Soviet researches of the last half century. Schapiro doesn't overplay his hand with regard to this assiduous Russian delving. He never suggests that its importance matches its bulk. Indeed the French edition of hitherto unpublished letters (which Pritchett used) is easily the most important catch in recent years.

So nobody who knows his way round is going to rub his eyes and say he never realised Turgenev was like *that*. But he will feel in safe hands with Professor Schapiro, and he will recognise the newness of some of the detail. In general terms, what I called sadness Professor Schapiro elaborates as 'a longing for decisiveness of character, for strength of will and determination which he was never able to achieve', a longing which 'remained with Turgenev all his life'. A bit severe, perhaps, and prosaic; but essentially true. More imaginative is a remark by Natalie Herzen which Schapiro himself quotes: 'when Turgenev is telling a story it is interesting, but as soon as the soul is touched on, there is neither greeting nor answer'. That certainly fits the fact that he had no big, deeply and centrally imagined novel inside him – nothing to compare with the books of his two compatriots. His talent (I believe and have said elsewhere) is a talent for nuance and atmosphere, prelude and aftermath, absence and dying, for failure, failure, failure. And when it comes to telling stories, so long as the stories are tethered to life Madame Herzen's 'interesting' is an understatement. He is one of the great observers of world literature, and his semi-documentary *Sportsman's Sketches* is perhaps the finest thing he ever did.

'Life and Times' was wisely chosen for Professor Schapiro's sub-title. His book interweaves its private and public themes through the nineteenth century's middle decades. It wasn't an easy thing to do well; there are so many Russian labels that make no immediate sense – Old Believers, Populists, Native Soil Men, Land and Liberty. Then there are some terms which make general sense, like Westerners, Slavophiles, Nihilists and Anarchists, which still need blocking in; indeed, Russia being Russia, general sense can be a snare. This explication is done tactfully, with occasional lapses as they seem to me. Thus we hear of 'the Decembrist rising', the 'conspiracy', the 'fiasco', but are never told who the Decembrists were or what they were up to. It's a question of what the reader can be expected to know, and of what is more and what is less relevant to Professor Schapiro's narrative. And it would be wrong to indulge more than a very small grumble against a book which doesn't draw these lines exactly where one would draw them oneself.

More serious is the whole business of art. None – or almost none – of these dozens and dozens of books about Turgenev would ever have seen the light of day if he weren't a great writer. Professor Schapiro, as I said, is not primarily concerned with the writing. There's no reason why he should be – he has many interesting and some new things to tell us about the life and times. It follows, though,

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that this is not the book for somebody who cares for the writing above all.

And it's not the book for anyone who wants to learn a lot about Russian literature. Professor Schapiro notes that Turgenev saw *The Government Inspector* in late adolescence, and laughed a great deal, though 'its real significance left no impression on him'. What is the 'real significance' of Gogol's play? Schapiro doesn't say. So he'd have done better not to talk about real significance. But if you want to know what a Native Soil Man was, this is the book for you.

R. W. Johnson

Jolly Firm

An End to Promises: Sketch of a Government 1970-74 by DOUGLAS HURD *Collins* £4.95

> The Conservatives were winning the election handsomely. Extraordinary news to me, but not to Mr Heath. To him it was simply the logical result of long years of preparation.

Thus Douglas Hurd on 1970. We are, at once, back in that strange Heathian world of remorseless self-confidence where all the shots are self-righteous straight drives and where anyone spinning the ball is told he'd jolly well better bowl straight or else. It is, too, a world in which even Hurd, Heath's political secretary and closest confidant, refers to him as 'Mr Heath'. This gradually mellows, but not to Ted or Edward, only to 'EH'. The usage, one notes, creeps in on the very numerous occasions on which Hurd was appalled at the prospect of His Master's Voice going off like some wooden hooter, wrecking the effect of the speeches Hurd had helped write:

> The voice might change its quality. The vocabulary might become stilted, the tone defensive. The thread of the argument might become lost in a mass of detail. Instead of speaking to people, Mr Heath would too often speak at them.

Once stiff-necked disaster has struck, however, we get 'EH exploded', 'EH retires in a cloud of stubborn and unconvincing negatives', and so on.

Not, one hastens to add, that this is a political memoir which lays bare recent history by its display of revealing gossip or new inside facts. Indeed, what makes the *Observer*'s decision to publish lengthy excerpts from Mr Hurd's book so surprising is that it is neither of these things. It is, in fact, a slight book in every respect and often bland to the point of prissiness. Whenever the narrative nears a pivotal issue or incident Hurd rather patronisingly tells us to avert our eyes. On the issue of arms sales to South Africa: 'It is not for me to trace the story of this imbroglio'; on persuading Pompidou to reverse De Gaulle's veto on Britain's EEC membership: 'Only Mr Heath can say how this was done'; on the 1972 miners' strike: 'It would be wearisome, and very depressing, to go through the course of the dispute'; on the U-turns of economic policy: 'History is a good judge, but she needs time to collect her thoughts.' It is the tone of the governess. 'Let us draw a veil here, dears. You know it can *only* end in tears.'

Yet Mr Hurd is clearly clever and can write. The reason for the emptiness is partly that he is still an active politician, keener to play the diplomat than to tell what he knows, and partly it is simply the Conservative version of good manners: it is all right to tell less than the whole truth to the public if one thereby helps one's friends.

There are, nonetheless, titbits here which help one to piece together the real story of Heath's premiership. This goes roughly as follows. Once upon a time there was a young meritocrat called Edward Heath, the son of a small builder and a lady's maid, who won a place at grammar school and then at Balliol. These successes convinced him that if you were energetic enough in your self-repression you might achieve a certain wooden competence which, even if it was not excellence and even if it was not yourself, was enough To Succeed. Entering the Tory party via the *Church Times* he was made chief Whip in a period (the late 1950s) when there was much grumbling on the backbenches (along which it was now his job to move) that the Tory Party had gone a sight too far away from free enterprise towards Butskellism. With these stirrings young Edward was naturally sympathetic and was not a little warmed that they came from these knights of the shires, for he could not but be conscious that he was something of a social freak in such company. Accordingly, when he got his chance to go out to bat for liberal capitalism – over EEC entry and the abolition of RPM – he did so with a will.

Then, lo, it was felt that the Tories must efface their Etonian image by electing a leader who, preferably, should be a meritocrat like Wilson. And so young Edward rose to fresh heights, propelled by the backbenchers he had cultivated. He was not surprised, though. He *knew* that if you did the right thing, then right things happened to you. Only five years later Edward became PM. Again, he was not surprised. He *knew* that if you did the right thing... He chose a Cabinet with as many meritocrats as he could find, including grocer Thatcher's daughter who, like him, expertly mimicked the accents of her betters.

Then came the mighty blow of the 1972 miners' strike. Edward had to give in and a wrathful mumbling began on the backbenches. Edward performed U-turns. The mumbling got louder. Edward began to lose confidence. He had done the right thing but the right things weren't happening to him. He knew the backbenchers had put him where he

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☐ The Alps, with their valleys, forests and soaring peaks, is ideal ballooning country. **Nikki English** *Guardian* (D. J. Walsh)

☐ Thus, the pressed tongue, when returning home, can be sliced and served fast . . . **'Bon Viveur'** *Daily Telegraph* (Molly Taylor)

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was and, being only the son of a lady's maid, could not despise them the way Macmillan had. Anyway, they wouldn't take it from *him*. So when the wretched miners started trouble again he was Jolly Firm with them. But this was no good either. So he called an election – not because it would do any good with the miners but because he didn't dare to give in before the angry glare of his backbenchers.

The rest is sad. He lost, first the election, and then the leadership, to none other than the grocer's daughter. Edward couldn't accept it. After all, he'd done the right thing and she hadn't, and yet the right things were happening to her, not him. It jolly well shouldn't be like that. Then came the young man Hurd to draw a veil. It didn't help much. Hurd, after all, was the son of a baron, a scion of Eton, Trinity, and the FO. How could *he* possibly understand?

Julian Barnes

Living Matter

London Magazine: 25th Anniversary Number
96p

At a recent Cheltenham Festival the editor of the *New Review* gave his opinion that the normal life-cycle of a literary magazine was between 40 and 50 issues; a remark which I – and, I dare say, other contributors – listened to with the apprehension that it might become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Energy as much as funding is what literary magazines tend to run out of; there's no value in mere survival in this field. It's easy to think of journals which have been dead on their feet for years: the *Cornhill*, for example, before it was 'temporarily suspended'. So the congratulations due to the *London Magazine* for having lasted 25 years are more than ritual: it has worked its passage.

The first issue came out in February 1954 'under a cloud of mourning for Dylan Thomas', at a time, seemingly irrecoverable, when Timex watches and Lieberman & Gortz binoculars found it worth their while to advertise in a literary periodical. The editor John Lehmann announced in his preface that 'There are no Keep Out notices hung up in front of the *London Magazine*.' And so it has continued. *LM* has never been a coterie magazine; it has rightly prided itself on an international awareness (and not just of the Connolly Grand-Tour sort); has remained the only literary monthly which tries to keep pace with all the arts; and in its short stories, criticism and lively series ('Leaving School', 'Living in London') mixes the debutant writer with the established. Every magazine does the last, of course; the test is not the merit board of famous names at the time of publication, but the list of those who subsequently become famous. This will all be quarried out in time by some dogged PhD, but the *London Magazine* should stand up well: the very first number, for instance, contains a poem by an as-yet-unhardbacked Cambridge graduate called Thom Gunn.

LM has, moreover, always looked good: first under Lehmann, and now, for the past 18 years under Alan Ross, it has taken the generally unfashionable view that good writing is helped by being presented in a manner which makes for easy reading; its quaint idea of very white paper and quite black print also means that photos and drawings show up well. Compare it, for instance, with the don't-read-me layout of *Encounter*, printed on that old recycled Bronco; or the hallucinatory *Bananas*, which makes picking up a copy feel like taking a moral decision. *LM* has always unpsychotically welcomed readers; its clean, bright design is shared with London Magazine Editions, whose short-lived series of paperbacks in the mid-Sixties were among the best examples of post-war softback production.

LM has now outlasted *Horizon*, *Criterion*, *Scrutiny*, the *London Mercury* and *Life and Letters* with only a flicker of erratic menstruality in recent years. The current number (subscriptions £10 p.a. from 30 Thurloe Place, SW7) is not a bumper special issue but the reliable monthly macedoine we have come to expect. It would be unhelpful to wish *LM* an unconditionally long life. Instead, let's just hope that Alan Ross doesn't tangle with the editor of *Blackwood's Magazine* (still unaccountably alive – the magazine, that is). In 1821, when literary feuds were not conducted by nobbling Arts Council panels and bitching in the Londoner's Diary, the editor of the original *London Magazine*, John Scott, ran a series of attacks on *Blackwood's*; they came to an abrupt end one day at Chalk Farm when Scott was killed in a duel by one of J. G. Lockhart's henchmen.

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Weaker Sex

However courteous and tender, man
Is in the act of love his love's aggressor;
No matter with what softness he began
He'll finish as her merciless oppressor;
And though the woman often seems to be
Happily unwilling to escape him,
And may display more appetite than he,
The simple fact remains: she cannot rape him.
You think he should rejoice that this is true?
Maybe, but there are worse things she can do.

Patricia Craig

Anti-Static

Praxis by FAY WELDON *Hodder* £4.95
The Dust Collector by JENNIFER LASH *Harvester* £4.95
Elgar On the Journey To Hanley by KEITH ALLDRITT *Deutsch* £4.95
The Secret Memoirs of Lord Byron by CHRISTOPHER NICOLE *Michael Joseph* £5.95

Betrayal, exploitation and oppression are states peculiarly associated with women in fiction at present, and they are related to a mode of perceiving which owes its existence, naturally enough, to the Women's Movement. 'Rather despairing books' which used to be written by women novelists have given way to works of fiction in which the origins of female despair and despondency are recognised and a blueprint for action is suggested. So far, the major, bulky, proselytising works have come from America: novels like *The Women's Room* and *Burning Questions*, in which the emotions of urgency and anger have swamped the purely literary impulses to record and assess. The repudiation of traditional, predetermined or distorted views, however, is most valuable and impressive when it is effected without ponderousness; and it seems that overt feminist fiction is beginning to move beyond the stage of realism and protest to a point where it can accommodate the personal and idiosyncratic. Fay Weldon is certainly among the novelists who are imposing a style upon the flux of feminine experience.

'Wherever she went she saw women betrayed, exploited and oppressed': the eponymous heroine of *Praxis* is a late convert to feminism and briefly an enthusiast. 'Bastard, adulteress, whore, committer of incest, murderess, what else? Hand me your labels. I'll wear them for you,' she bursts out, willing to take upon herself the universal burden of female guilts.

Many conventional social disadvantages are foisted upon Praxis (known in her less flamboyant phases as Pattie). She is not only female but illegitimate, and second daughter of a Jewish gentleman and a Miss Lucy Parker whose future is already circumscribed: nothing is in store for her, the deserted woman, but the lunatic asylum and the padded cell. 'A mad mother, a loony sister, an absent father. Enough, after all, to upset anyone,' Praxis muses, at a time when she is still trying to believe that the causes of her discontent are personal, not social. The line is an instance of the humour that works by classic understatement, and in the novel it is placed in effective juxtaposition with ironic exaggeration: all the horrors of female imaginings are recorded in one form or another, along with all the murky, underhand complications in women's lives. 'Mother, what kind of world did you bring me into?' Praxis cries out, echoing the quieter reproach of Plath:

> And this is the kingdom you bore me to
> Mother, mother.

Inevitably, perhaps, the theme is centred on mothers and sisters, no matter whose. Praxis's temporary foster-mother is a schoolteacher, a

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Miss Leonard who, at 45, goes out one evening on a whim and gives herself in succession to a father, a son and a passing GI. The result is Mary, plucked in time from the dead body of her mother who has fallen victim to a buzz-bomb (the year is 1945). 'A female Anti-Christ,' claims Praxis's demented sister Hypatis (Hilda), regarding Mary; not an inapt assessment, perhaps, given Miss Leonard's unholy trinity of lovers. Hilda, the bad sister, the ill-wisher, the scholar, the professional spinster, represents one option open to intelligent females, but she is one of the least plausible figures in the book. The claim that her madness enables her 'to function as a man might do' is simply not convincing: to flaunt obsessions which focus, in turn, on rats, stars and anti-static is not a way to prosper in the Civil Service.

Occasionally, the outrageously appropriate event or fate becomes glib in the telling; the joke loses its sharp edge or the bitterness loses its undertone of humour. But these are minor defects in a novel that never descends to crass introspection; it increases the significance of its characters, in the manner of the fable, by keeping them at a proper distance, and presents its social observations in a form that is both eccentric and diverting.

The characters of Jennifer Lash are also representative, but less successfully so. They inhabit an unnamed city in Ireland: 'Within it, people gather, disperse, grasp and release that force which runs throughout and is both gutter and artery to all experience.' I am not sure what this sentence means, but it is plain that the author subscribes to a curious belief – more often manifested in the short story – that the most profound aspect of an artistic sensibility is an intense reverence for the particulars of everyday life. If these can be listed in a sing-song tone, without grammatical coherence, so much the better. The pursuit of minutiae leads naturally to dust, and so the dust collector is a figure positively bristling with implications. Actually, the book is by no means badly written, and the central idea – dust collecting – has at least the charm of novelty, even if it is symbolically overloaded: Jennifer Lash has tried to show us altogether too much in a handful of dust.

There is nothing tricky or ostentatious about *Elgar on the Journey to Hanley*: it is straightforward, competent historical writing. Its subject is the tenuous and protracted relationship between the composer and a young woman named Dora Penny, whose passion, flair and exhilaration are all attached, in retrospect, to a series of musical events devised by the Elgars. Dora, bicycling in a yellow costume along a country lane, is very much a girl of the period: too well-bred to be avid, not sufficiently headstrong to appear distinctive. Elgar is capricious in the usual way of the person subject to artistic pressures: alternately charming and petulant, liable to behave badly at the dinner table. It is perhaps not unexpected, in view of the Midlands setting ting and the bourgeois flavour, to find the prose reminiscent of Arnold Bennett's.

The novel is cautious and realistic, two qualities which are strikingly absent from the 'secret memoirs' which Christopher Nicole has concocted on behalf of Lord Byron. The result is just a great, riproaring mish-mash, set in an age of fancy dress, heavy-handed in style and somewhat repetitive in content. To adapt Lady Caroline Lamb's remark about Byron, it is thick, slick and tedious to read.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Benedict Nightingale

The Front

Independence *Bush*
Full Frontal *Royal Court*
Flashpoint *Mayfair*
The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold *Roundhouse*

Mustapha Matura's *Independence*, like his *Play Mas*, is set in a Caribbean island lately released from the colonial straitjacket and still discovering its underdeveloped muscles. Power has once again gone to the heads of some of those who have procured it. At any rate, the shambling, apologetic ex-governor, over from England for the Independence Day celebrations, is rather pointedly contrasted with a spruce new apparatchik capable of threatening elements he arbitrarily deems anti-social with the work-camp or worse. 'I never liked him, I wanted to get him,' he snaps, offhandedly explaining his plans for a young 'brother' who has presumed to resign from the job the party assigned him, that of waiter at the 'pool bar' of the local Grand Hotel.

This moribund edifice turns out to be Mr Matura's symbol of the past that still haunts and unsettles the West Indian present. The government wants to turn it into a proletarian fun-factory; but, because of its colonial associations, no one actually goes there, even for a drink and a swim. Allen, the rebellious waiter, proposes to leave it for a farm somewhere in the island interior. But Drakes, who still hankers for the time when he was regarded as the best barman in the British Caribbean, can only droop over his slim store of rum and coca cola, in dwindling hopes of one day getting a customer to serve. Denounced by the party functionary as a has-been, he promptly sets the hotel ablaze and, by a process never satisfactorily explained, becomes caretaker of its ruins. The play ends with a moonlight encounter between this glum spectre and the visiting Allen, now shiny and robust in the T-shirt of his agricultural commune.

One character exploits freedom, another shies from the opportunities it offers, and a third uses it to his and the nation's betterment. The pattern is amply, perhaps inordinately clear; but, Matura being Matura, it is not permitted to calcify the theatre into a schoolroom or the play into a seminar. If *Independence* hasn't the fizz, bustle and unpredictable invention of *Play Mas*, its often quirky and quizzical dialogue is still recognisably the work of the most perceptive and humane black dramatist presently writing in Britain. Even the introduction of the English top-drawer – the female representative of which slips Allen a thousand-dollar tip in atonement for some past indiscretion of her own, this giving him the capital his farm needs – even this is more plausibly and sympathetically handled than some of my harder-nosed colleagues have cared to believe. And Roland Rees, directing against a postcard-blue background of water and sky, gets more than satisfactory performances from Malcolm Frederick, Ewart James Walters and (especially) Stefan Kalipha, a frail, frazzled figure who ends by touching a note of late-autumnal woe I had thought outside his range.

The main criticism of *Independence* is that it needs to be longer, more psychologically elaborate in its mapping-out of the routes to success and fulfilment on the one hand, failure and dissolution on the other. The main criticism of *Full Frontal*, however, is that it needs to be by Mr Matura, a playwright whom *As Time Goes By*, among other things, proved to be as deft an observer of blacks in London as in his native Trinidad. The idea behind the piece is potentially profitable. In my reporting days I myself remember having to interview an Indian who implored me to use the columns of *The Guardian* to lobby for the compulsory repatriation of all recent immigrants. So desperate was he to dissociate himself from those notorious idlers, scroungers and criminals he would, I daresay, have ended by applying for admission to the National Front, just like the protagonist of Michael Hastings's 55-minute monologue. There's no reason why such a character shouldn't exist, nor any reason why a gifted playwright shouldn't manipulate him into condemning evil and injustice through his very advocacy of them, after the manner of the *Modest Proposal*.

Alas, there's a lack both of satiric subtlety and of human idiosyncrasy in Mr Hastings's would-be fascist, who begins by passing himself off as a native African conscientiously outraged by all things un-British, but turns out to be another raging victim from the London ghettoes. He has lost his dead-end job because of his colour, been unjustly arrested and abused by the police, caught his wife with her lover, seen his child taken away, and more. His visit to the Front is a last-gasp gesture of vindictive despair. I thought Mr Hastings's *Gloo Joe* an over-rated piece, altogether too condescending to the jumping black scallywag it showed outwitting British immigration, but at least it had wit and a kind of wayward plausibility. This is a handful of case-notes extracted from Social Security files and compressed into one all-purpose exposé; and not even Winston Ntshona's perpetuum-mobile acting can bring it to life.

Tom Kempinski's *Flashpoint* presents us with an army dorm occupied by somewhat glibly conceived 'types', one of whom, a facetious tease with a Cockney accent, a good heart and a sensible head, is allowed to rabbit on ad nauseam and beyond. But wait a moment. The place is Ulster 'next year', when martial law has been introduced, and this little party is due to shoot a deserter at dawn. What follows can't be fully described, because it includes two ironic twists that surprise yet seem perfectly inevitable. Enough to say that, by allowing a bullet-weary squaddie to parley with his mates' lies for the prisoner's release, Mr Kempinski injects a good deal of tension

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into his scenario and also manages to target his moral sights on the abuses of power and human rights occurring in and out of our army of occupation in Northern Ireland This is an example of that rare genre, the polemical thriller, not so sophisticated as David Hare's Chandlerish *Knuckle*, but pretty effective

The Roundhouse is at last what its name always seemed to pretend, the only satisfactory theatre-in-the-round in London, a homespun version of the many-tiered space capsule that squats inside the vast reaches of the Royal Exchange in Manchester. Indeed, it is precisely from there that Ronald Harwood's adaptation of Waugh's *Pinfold* comes, improved in one respect since I saw it in the north in 1977. Michael Hordern, far too much the harmless codger before, is now sufficiently grouchy, menacing and lugubrious to justify the cri de coeur that trips off his forked tongue – 'why does everybody except me find it so easy to be nice?' This, combined with some slight adjustment at the ending, means that the play is no longer simply about an overworked novelist poisoned by chloral. It is nearer to what it always should have been, a glimpse into Waugh's private demonology, a visit to the snakepit he kept inside his skull, an ordeal boldly faced and survived.

Radio

Peter Porter

Feuds Corner

About Face (Radio 4) is devoted to the looking-glass world of political change Presumably the programme was devised to add a little spice to the old dish of partisan debate – what have political rivals to say to each other any more apart from exchanging signals of position? *About Face* might seem at first a breakthrough: it confronts Shortly Floorcross figures and urges them to tell what they found distasteful in their old allegiences and why their apostasy fits them better. Thus Robert Kee, in the chair, acted as umpire while Peter Hain, ex-Liberal and recruit to Labour, argued with Andrew Phillips, former Labour and now prospective Liberal parliamentary candidate, about Socialism and Liberalism. The *Radio Times* pointed up the confrontation by picturing them together in profile, facing inwards. This emphasis on Tweedledum and Tweedledee (most people look alike in equal profile) is my chief hesitancy in praising an otherwise interesting and enjoyable new series Isn't there something here of that dire British fondness for pronouncing 'a plague on both your houses'? To which perhaps is also added the feeling that the programme might be regarded by its regular listeners as 'Renegade's Corner'.

In practice, it hasn't worked out quite that way – partly due to the very different effect of the second programme in the series, where Milovan Djilas and Paul Foot replaced the advertised confrontation of Reg Prentice and Humphrey Berkeley – the latter, of course, being unavailable in a South African hospital. There is no substitute for the experience of absolute power in action, and while Foot argued persuasively that revolution did not have to be betrayed, and instanced ways of preventing power from becoming concentrated in the hands of a few cadres, Djilas countered remorselessly with examples of what had actually happened in the communist world. This debate was not a pure example of the series' convention, perhaps, since Foot had no right-wing past to expunge, but it provided an interesting insight into the difference between academic and practical politics. If I understood Djilas's remarks about Allende's Chilean experiment correctly, then I would place his political creed right beside Mrs Thatcher's. His version of a mixed economy undoubtedly emphasises the private sector at the expense of the public, and he criticised Allende for attempting to put Socialist ownership in the forefront of his political platform. He reassured Foot that he was still in favour of the revolution but his views of practical politics were moderate at every point. At the end I felt that Djilas would be unwilling to support any programme of revolutionary change whatsoever, simply because he is convinced that once begun the operation would lead inexorably to tyranny.

It is a bleak view, but it springs from his own experience in Eastern Europe. Here the programme's convention does come in useful – it makes one ask whether Djilas's absolute condemnation of revolution is not the mirror-image of his former absolute marxism. It would be fascinating to confront him with Solzhenitsyn – unmountable though such an occasion would probably be.

Radio 4's *Moby Dick* was the noisiest thing since the Blitz, but that was all to the good: the novel, while it may be a masterpiece, strikes me as the first text ever written specifically for the campus seminar. As the prefatory programme on Melville's life, *Call Me Ishmael* (Radio 4), made clear, he was himself the opposite of a modern literary explainer. More of a Biblical over-reacher, he went his own way through the world, enduring extraordinary hardships and experiencing the exotic at its most unattractive. His books, with the exceptions of *Benito Cereno* and *Billy Budd*, are turgid and willed, his language has the terrible boring glare of experimental fiction. Radio helped Captain Ahab and the crew of the Pequod to survive the larger-than-life happenings of Moby Dick's hunting-down. I found Anthony Hopkins's score obtrusive, but the ingenuity of sound which went into Ahab's last hunt in the whaleboat and the sinking of ship was decidely impressive. Ahab's scenes with the little boy Pip were haunting and claustrophobic. Elsewhere, accents were pretty uncertain, being more Captain Kidd than Nantucket. The chief pleasure the programme gave was its added dimension of life – it became a sounding-board for the inhuman symbols of Melville's imagination. It is strange how the superhuman and colossal in American literature find such a home in academic analysis, and salutary to be reminded of their oddity by a dramatisation such as this.

Melville got a fairly honourable mention among the few heroes and many villains of the opening-up of the South Seas, in Radio 3's *Polynesian Evening*. This was more didactic than the network's recent *Caribbean Evening*, but almost as enjoyable. While the big jets continue to bring tourists and litter to Easter Island, descendants of the European invaders are helping Polynesians recover their heritage and former values. New Zealanders and Australians in particular have made themselves expert in the Islanders' music and art, and also history. It was fascinating to hear how one man obtained a grant from an Australian University to sail a large canoe all the way from Hawaii to Tahiti. Polynesia seems to be one part of the world where the miseries of the past are not being allowed to blight the expectations of the future There were some startling felicities during the course of the evening, none more surprising than hearing a Maori choir sing the Papageno/Pamina duet from *The Magic Flute*, 'Bei Männern', adapted to make a Methodist hymn.

Films

Ian Hamilton

Delta Plus

National Lampoon's Animal House (AA) *Empire*
Too Many Chefs (A) *Ritz*
In Praise of Older Women (X) *Prince Charles*

The *National Lampoon* is a bawdy-satirical American monthly that gets its title from the well-known Harvard journal. The bawdy is pretty rough-tongued and explicit – lots of Robert Crumb-style comic strips, some fleshy photo-features and much loser-to-loser meditation on the dreadful things that women do to men – but the satire is, to say the least, limp and half-hearted. A clue here to the magazine's likely readership, perhaps – college-boy, but strictly class of '59 or thereabouts. The magazine speaks freely, if not foully, but the subject is invariably repression: a Seventies directness applied to the embarassments of the late Fifties and early Sixties.

And it is this formula that produces many of the laughs (and there are many) in the *National Lampoon's Animal House*: the decor, the uniforms, and many of the attitudes come to us straight from early Presley campus idylls, or even from *Rebel Without a Cause*, and at least some of the chirpy delinquencies derive from Sergeant Bilko, but the film's animating spirit is blisteringly up to date. More than just a comic fantasy about going back to school to punch some loathed teacher in the mouth, it's essentially a mean-eyed dream of vengeance against what Teacher, in that bygone epoch, used to get away with teaching.

The setting is an Ivy-Leagueish American college in the early days of the Vietnam conscription, and the characters are sliced into two camps. There are the Omegas: the ultra-clean-limbed fraternity, button-downed, forever sucking up, but also – as we learn from the way they handle their initiation rites and from their attachment to the college military corps – sadistic, cowardly and crooked. Publicly moralistic, privately corrupt: the all-American good boy, we are meant to feel. Pitting against the goodies are the inhabitants of the Delta fraternity – a marvellous collection of scruffs and villains, but comradely, adventurous and free of bullshit. The Deltas booze and screw, cheat in their exams (or vaguely try to), play the new rock records, and tirelessly dedicate themselves to what they

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describe as 'pointless' acts of self-fulfilment. The Deltas may be pointless, but they are as resourceful as Hollywood commandos when it comes to protecting their own lack of interests. The Dean of the college – played by the always welcome John Vernon – is busy planning a college parade in the local town (and he's been heavily warned by the local Italian mayor that he'd better make sure it's a really nice parade) and he recruits the Omega leaders in a plan to get rid of the Deltas before the great day. The Deltas, to whom all parades are rather like exams, fight back, and this is the film's main point of contest. (The showdown, I should say, is disappointingly tame and chaotic.)

Main contests aside, though, most of the film's fun is situation-fun. There's the head-Omega being worked on in his sports car by his Sandra Dee-type girl (after five manipulative moments she petulantly tears off her rubber gloves and pipes: 'Is it *supposed* to be this soft?'); the unashamedly gluttonous and voyeuristic Bluto – John Belushi – clambering desperately up his ladder to the girls' dormitory windows (Bluto also has another fine moment when, after listening intently for some time to a wet-looking folk singer on the stairs at a rock-party, he suddenly grabs the doleful minstrel's guitar, smashes it into a thousand pieces, and then, as if some extremely minor breach of manners had occurred, mumbles his apologies and passes on); and, maybe best of all, Stratton – played by the excellent Tim Matheson – determining at all costs to have a girl one evening: he reads in the newspapers that a nearby sophomore had been killed that day in Pottery when her kiln blew up, and in all innocence turns up at her college as her 'date'. As planned, Stratton ends up being 'looked after' by the deceased's ('I don't know how to break this to you') room-mate. There are a dozen such genuinely funny individual sketches and, for belly laughs alone, *Animal House* should certainly be seen. But there's also an affecting incongruity, between that period and this treatment, which makes the whole atmosphere of the thing likely to last even longer than its individual jokes.

Nothing so solemn could be said about *Too Many Chefs*, a likeable crimi-comedy but cumbersomely done. The idea is a good-ish one: why are the great chefs of Europe being knocked off one by one – each killing performed in the manner of each chef's most celebrated meal. That is, the baked pigeon expert ends up baked, the steak virtuoso must be hung, and so on. Jacqueline Bissett is the world's best 'creator' of exotic puddings and, as the main-course operators bite the dust, George Segal – Bissett's ex-husband and a fast-food vulgarian – tries to work out how *she*'s likely to end up. Supervising the atrocities is Robert Morley, the editor of *Epicurus* magazine. It was he who had nominated the great chefs in the first place and he's fresh from a doom-laden visit to the quack ('Do take your coat off' – '*Why?* Do you expect your diagnosis to take us through a change of seasons?'). A nice performance, this, by Morley – for once working within the limits of his preposterousness.

In Praise of Older Women was a pretentious novel by Stephen Vicinczey. The novel came out several years ago and – as a best-seller – has taken its time coming to the screen. Perhaps earlier option-purchasers were put off by the amount of flaccid Magyar ratiocination that would have to be stripped away in order for the action to be followed. The action – here entirely naked – involves youngish man making out with lots of slighter older women. Some insulting – to people who were there – material about Hungary in 1956 is thrown in, but we oughtn't to let that bother us any more than it bothers the film's hero, who simply alters his rhythm slightly at the sound of Russian tanks.

Television

Julian Barnes

Pawn Pushers

Even those who think that a poisoned pawn is something to be referred to the NVLA (and probably the RSPCA as well) should tune in to the final stages of *The Master Game* (Tuesdays, BBC-2). While darts has turned out to be the hypnotic bore of tube sport, chess is an unexpected and gratifying success, proving – and it needs proving, over and over again, to those who run channels – that the watchability of a TV show bears no direct relation to the number of allegedly 'visual' things taking place. *The Master Game* is produced with crisp excellence: the play is annotated by voice-over comments from the pawn-merchants themselves (dubbed later, but the effect is of a hidden bug in the players' brains); while mid-game analysis is provided by the lucid and jokey William Hartston. The format is at present exactly right, which in all TV shows makes one nervous, since it can now only go wrong. So we must plead with Jeremy James and producer Robert Toner not to fall for the sort of 'livening' effects which were once brought in to disimprove *Pot Black*: Teddy Tinling clothes, for instance, and a 'special guest' like Les Dawson or Arthur Negus, who first winningly admits he knows nothing at all about chess, and then chooses his 'move of the game', subsequently replayed in slow-motion to the sound of show-biz joshing.

One thing *TMG* brings out more accessibly than chess books is the difference in character between players, and the effect character seems to have on styles of play. The most exciting – or 'sharp', as the argot has it – game so far has been the first semi-final in which the NS's shaggy leather-boy Tony Miles lost to neat worrier Vlastimil Hort (who carries a biorhythm chart around with him and, as Hartston nicely put it, 'refuses to play well when his biorhythms say he won't'); but the most gratifying one was Donner's hilarious first-round victory over the surly American Browne. Donner gloomily found himself in a position where 'There's probably no player in the world who has lost so many games with this variation as I have, but I must play it'; and then began to bemuse Browne – 'What's he doing that for?' the American growled, with something approaching contempt. (It's a pleasing feature of *TMG* that the players seem retrospectively honest, not claiming more for a move than was there, and admitting bafflement and rage.) Hartston, asked about the time factor, confidently pronounced, 'I've seen Browne play 10 moves in a minute so I shouldn't think that bothers him'; whereupon Browne immediately got very bothered indeed by time, Donner's comments flew up an octave – 'He's crazy' – and Browne, in sight of a draw, blew it. As they shook hands and discussed the crucial blunder, Donner, with that helpful desire to inform which goes with the high of a chess victory, rubbed it in with 'c6 was a bad move too'. Browne, with that aggressive desire to inform which goes with the low of a chess defeat, grunted back balefully, 'Well at that point I tried too hard to win', and stomped off the set to the familiar tinkle of crushed bottle.

No prizes for attributing correctly the following two lines. 'A satisfied customer? We should have him stuffed'; and 'He's threatening to take me to a topless steakhouse in (*pause*) Aylesbury.' The first meant that *Fawlty Towers* (BBC-2) is back with all its aggressive brio; a little stuttering in parts (Prunella Scales corpsing a bit by the look of things), but also with a useful find in Joan Sanderson's tough, stroppy, mannish county guest – one of those women whom Dylan Thomas characterised (doubless with some relief) as being 'inaccessible as goat crags'. The second meant that Alan Bennett is still toppling towards self-parody. The fifth play of his patchy series, *One Fine Day* (LWT), was about an hour too long and had a lot to thank its actors for: in particular Robert Stephens and (in his first straight role) Dave Allen.

Allen played a rumpled, opera-loving property man nearly on the skids, who just managed to outwit a rising young smart-arse in his firm and sell a white-elephant tower block in N22 first. Those still awake cheered wanly. Allen made an agreeable, weary, taciturn hero. The only trouble with agreeable, weary, taciturn heroes, especially in long mood plays, is that as they aren't given to explaining themselves, you often can't tell why they do things. At the start of the play, for instance, Allen allowed his teenage son to sleep with his girlfriend in the family home; after a few weeks of squatting (for no explained reason) in the unsellable tower block, of watching life on the roof garden of a nearby Odeon, nearly giving up his job, and finally clinching the deal, he then, without giving a reason, refused to let his son sleep with a second girlfriend in the family home. Maybe Bennett's been told that in every play the main character has to 'show development'; maybe the sight of life in N22 makes you puritanical; maybe the fact that the second girlfriend was played by the daugher of Michael Frayn had something to do with it. Or maybe – given Bennett's known willingness to go along with suggested changes in his plays – some depressive teaboy on the set nobbled the author and asked him for a downbeat ending more like his own life. Who can tell?

About an hour could also have been helpfully lopped from Christopher Booker's *City of Towers*, the first film in BBC-2's week-long series *Where We Live Now* (to which I'll return next week). It was one of those 'personal view' films in which everything in 20th-century history is held to be relevant to the subject – tower-block building, in this case – and must, therefore, be shown. Clips of Hitler, a hectoring Lenin, the first world war ('Four years and ten million dead later . . .') and Picasso's *Demoiselles* – to the backing of *The Rite of Spring* – eventually led up to Maxwell Fry and Ronan Point. Booker as property

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journalist is good news; Booker as Muggeridgean penseur – adopting that mannered style in which everything to be disparaged is first labelled 'vast', 'mighty', 'startling' or spectacular' – is a grandiloquent bore.

He cast himself as an engaging, doughty Little Englander. With his first swing he cut down all those terrible lefty foreign architects; with his second he cut down all those terrible capitalist property speculators; and in the last reel heroes emerged, as the ordinary people (rallied by a few campaigning journalists) rose and imposed their will on the totalitarian planners. For a programme nominally about architecture, it was revealingly short on any analysis of particular buildings. Booker's technique was to show a skyscraper, name the architect, identify him as a disciple of the lefty foreign devil Le Corbusier, and rest his case: it was taken as proven that the building was ugly, inefficient, liable to fall down, and had been built at vast profit by speculators (does Booker think his nice Victorian streets weren't built by speculators?). That people hate living in tower blocks is an undeniable fact; that this invalidates the entire modern movement in architecture, as Booker presumes, is a daft logical leap. The majority of modern buildings are more efficient; they simply work better. Where would Booker rather listen to a concert, for example: in the Festival Hall (routine target for his disparagement), or the Albert Hall, with the echo of the brass bouncing down his shirt collar off the back wall after a colourful, Victorian two-second pause?

Music

Andrew Clements

Standing Still

Giacinto Scelsi *ICA Theatre*
David Bedford *Queen Elizabeth Hall*

Described by no less an authority than Morton Feldman as 'the Charles Ives of Italy', Giacinto Scelsi is practically unknown in Britain. Before last Sunday's ICA concert only a couple of pieces had been performed here, an anonymity almost cultivated, it seems, by the composer himself. Scelsi is now 74, an Italian aristocrat whose comfortable private income has allowed him to devote himself to producing music. He is said to reject the title of 'composer': the word is derived from the Latin *componere*, to put together, he says, and he could never be that sort of artisan. Rather he is an intermediary between two worlds, a courier between the cultures of East and West. He will not provide notes for his music – 'one should not be concerned with the courier but only with the message he brings'.

Such stuff are myths made on. But from the evidence of the ICA programme, the parallel with Charles Ives, the 20th century's *locus classicus* of the undiscovered genius, cannot be pressed too far. Scelsi shares with the American only his neglect; he has no comparable pioneering originality. Scelsi is essentially a meditative composer. His view of music is static: it presents a musical object and proceeds to examine it from all possible viewpoints. But the gap between the artistic intention and the finished musical artefact sometimes seems disturbingly wide. The earliest work in the concert, his Second Piano Sonata, written in 1939 but receiving its first performance at the ICA, is apparently a musical progress from the turbulence of the real world to the peace of meditation and back again to everyday life; yet it is simply bad music. The structure is crude and undisciplined, streams of repeated notes overlaid with no apparent regard for the 'vertical' aspects of the sound. Rhythmically, the music goes nowhere: perhaps it's not intended to, but nevertheless its energy is squandered too easily. Often it sounds like milk-and-water Scriabin, Szymanowski or even early Messiaen.

It was surely a mistake to begin the concert with what was by a long way the worst music of the evening. The rest of the programme was made up of more recent pieces and settled down to suggest a distinctive, if minor, talent. To his credit, Scelsi seems to have appreciated quite early on that rhythmic invention was not his strong point and henceforth began to make a virtue of stasis, producing slowly-changing textural pieces which eke out a minimum of musical material. All the works we heard were for stringed instruments; most impressive was *Xynobis* for solo violin – a fierce, three-movement meditation representing, we are assured, 'The ascensional power of "energy" towards the Spirit'. It came across as a remarkably powerful exploration of the violin's sonorous potential, each string of the instrument treated as a discrete voice, their music split between four separate staves. To hear one such work is to be impressed by its originality; to hear in close proximity two other works of similar kind (*Manto*, for viola, and parts of *La Trilogia*, a 35-minute discourse for solo cello on the three ages of man) is to try the listener's patience severely.

But perhaps Scelsi's most unexpected quality is his ability to inspire a devotion bordering on fanaticism in his interpreters. His music is astonishingly difficult to play, demanding impossible fingerings and arcane timbral effects, while the end product sounds positively unvirtuosic. All the ICA performers had studied with Scelsi and the performances certainly conjured a strange, rapt intensity out of all apparent proportion to the quality of music. One tiny work, however, stood apart from the rest. *CKCKC* is a set of two songs for voice and mandolin; the text is composed entirely of nonsense syllables, the accompaniment confined to a single chord and *tala*-like patterns rapped out on the body of the instrument. Performed by the viola player Geneviève Renot its effect was entirely charming. It could almost have been the work of a different composer.

If Scelsi's music fails to live up to one's best expectations, David Bedford's has long since frustrated them. Once upon a time Bedford was one of the Bright Young Things of the British avant garde, an independent voice who had studied serialism and electronic music with Lugi Nono and rejected their rigours in favour of a freer, more experimental idiom. His works of the mid-Sixties, particularly his settings of texts by Kenneth Patchen, seemed impressive in their fresh sounds and direct, effective language. Since then, much of his work has lurched towards the most commercial of pop music: he orchestrated Mike Oldfield's *Tubular Bells*, gilding an already tawdry lily, and contributed pseudo-serious rock compositions of his own – *Star's End*, a display vehicle for Oldfield's guitar playing, and more recently *The Odyssey* and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

The London Music Digest's Bedford retrospective covered his work from *That White and Radiant Legend* of 1966 to a medley from the children's-opera version of the *Ancient Mariner*, finished last year. It was a depressing occasion. The failings of Bedford's later 'art-music' pieces could too easily be projected back on to the earlier music – a substitution of short non-developing sections for a through-composed structure, close imitation replacing authentic invention, gestural devices in place of distinguished musical ideas. Now the sound events in a piece like the guitar solo *You Asked for It* (1969) seem contrived and self-indulgent and Piano Piece No.2 (1968) becomes a succession of commonplaces. Among the ruins the quality of a work like *That White and Radiant Legend* stands out as an example of the size of Bedford's talent and the promise it once held.

Art

John Spurling

In the Raw

Outsiders *Hayward*
Hubert Dalwood *Hayward*

The admiration for 'Outsider Art' or 'Art Brut', as its founding father and first major collector Jean Dubuffet christened it, is based on a typical piece of 20th-century intellectual hokum: that 'raw' art is somehow more 'authentic' than art which has been refined and contaminated by 'culture'. Victor Musgrave, one of the organisers of the Hayward exhibition, burbles enthusiastically about 'a secret race of creative giants' and 'the sources of creativity whose enigmatic force they ride like Apocalyptic horsemen without any desire to tame them'; he considers that he has assembled several 'of the greatest artists of all time'. Alain Bourbonnais, a contributor as well as a collector, adopts a half mystic, half nanny-like attitude towards the works on display – nearly a quarter of them from his own collection. Their 'authenticity' must not be 'compromised'. The show is 'a treat for us all', but it must be followed by 'a period of calm . . . a certain occultation'. Public exhibitions are dangerous; the little dears mustn't be allowed too much contact with the wicked world of 'Official Art'. Roger Cardinal, the other organiser, speaks of 'primal freshness' and 'the authentic impulse to create', but is less protective towards his charges. 'Outsider Art', he proclaims threateningly, 'is a force in motion which contests the authority of the central establishment and maintains a posture of dissidence in the face of the influence to which it is subject.'

In effect, as its advocates imply, this is an exhibition of child art done by adults. Many are gifted with a remarkable instinct for colour and design. Depths are certainly plumbed. But they are child depths: small, shallow pools

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in which people with urges of adult proportion (chiefly sexual and religious), but restricted emotional development, play out their lonely, under-nourished fantasies. For, of course, these fantasies are not 'raw' at all, they are simply formed from the cultural influences of childhood – the insides of churches, illustrated books, cartoons, dolls, etc – which have never been re-stocked or refreshed. Deformity and misery are what chiefly surround one at the Hayward: the deformity of growing up without ever becoming properly aware of other people, the misery of impenetrable self-absorption, only fitfully relieved by the pleasure of self-expression. More than half the artists spent or are spending part of their lives in mental institutions; all give the same impression of being cut off from life and growth, symbolised by their use of dead materials (rubbish, driftwood, scrap), their imperviousness to any mature influences, their concentration on purely masturbatory sex and purely ritualised religion. Even such apparently celebratory artists as Scottie Wilson or Augustin Lesage – the one with his innumerable clusters of parallel lines, the other with his monumental symmetries of coloured pattern – are really constructing hedges against a vacuum. The sweet, spring-like colours of the American recluse Henry Darger turn out on closer inspection to be the background to a vast comic-book saga (written and illustrated), chiefly involving the torture, hanging, crucifixion and disembowelment of naked children by uniformed adults.

Contrary to the views of the organisers, the best things in the show are in some degree an escape from raw solipsism towards a recognition, even if a negative one, of the outside world: Louis Soutter's lively ink figures, like shadows on the wall of Plato's cave, or Oskar Voll's pencil drawings of vulturine military figures with huge epaulettes. Most outgoing of all are several French protegés of M. Bourbonnais, four of whom make complicated, surrealistic toys, but two of whom might appear in any ordinary mixed show of contemporary sculptures. Pascal Verbena's dark, wooden 'abodes' or 'hidie-holes', in which small, pale figures and sometimes a mouse or a ladybird can be glimpsed in niches behind doors or sliding panels, are sly, witty images of his own predicament. Francis Marshall's large, lumpy rag-dolls, dirty and roughly tied with string, arranged in dramatic tableaux, comment with aggressive fervour on the decrepitude and wretchedness of human society. Even so, by the time you have been round these 400-odd items, you begin to hanker after official art of almost any quality, its openness to experience as well as to diverse cultural influences, its communicative assumption that you, the audience, are there.

Upstairs, sure enough, is the Arts Council's kindly answer to your need: a memorial retrospective for the sculptor Hubert Dalwood, who died two years ago at the age of 52. Dalwood, who came up in the wake of Armitage, Chadwick and Butler and was soon afterwards swamped in Caro's bow-wave, would have been happiest as part of a School, not being quite powerful enough to stand on his own. His work strove very hard to be powerful and in some of the pieces of the late Fifties and Early Sixties – clenched images of barbaric magnificence such as *Orb, Throne, Large Object, Double Casket* – almost succeeded. Gradually, however, as he raised his sights to some sort of significant monumentality – *Egyptian Column, OAS Assassin, Monument for a Poet* – the whole attempt crumbled into bombast. As the work declined further into shiny, cage-like structures of serried aluminium columns and mirrors – at once elaborate and superficial – Dalwood himself was becoming more of an official figure, heading the Sculpture Department at Hornsey, attending international sculpture symposia, sitting on the Serpentine committee. But his last, Japan-influenced phase seems to have a new modesty and delicacy – an emphasis on flat, partly-contoured surfaces directly reminiscent of landscape and a preference for lighter, less crushing verticals. Some of the later pieces are actually miniature landscape gardens, incorporating pebbles or small plants, and he was employed, just before he died, designing grounds and fountains for various edifices in the Persian Gulf. But the show is a rather melancholy antidote to the misery downstairs.

Sport

Russell Davies

Fin de Tour

Australian readers (Bruce and Raelene Bonkers) have been clamouring for a revised version of our 'Team Talk', published as England's cricketers left for the Antipodes last back end. On the grounds that it is cruel to deny a masochist his pain, I offer these *fin-de-tour* reports, written in wallaby-blood upon a palimpsest of gilded sheepskin, viz:

M. BREARLEY (Middlesex): Brilliant, delightfully grizzled, slightly fat-arsed conquering hero. Scampering genius and grand old man, silk-swathed at the throat, his gleaming helm garlanded with champagne corks. Bats first in order to get it over with, devoting rest of time to study of weather-charts, water-tables, contour-maps, horticultural studies of grass-types, manufacturers' specifications, tanners' lore and ballistic reports. Good interviewee, though incipiently paranoid: tends to preface answer with 'Of *course* we do!', whatever the question.

R. WILLIS (Warwicks): If ever made honorary Red Indian, would be known as Big Tall Threat Him Usually Deliver. On Second thoughts, had better go through blood-brother ceremony pretty soon, lest demoted to Big Tall Threat Him Lose Rhythm. In fact, him have no rhythm. Him have big long levers, heap determination. Him bat windmill storm-time, plenty thrashing, sod you all.

I. BOTHAM (Somerset): Big, bouncy, devil-may-clear-up-afterwards, Ian Botham has been the scourge of the Aussies this tour, and bids fair to be a thorn up their nose for many a decade to come. But away from the hurly-burly of the crickety-wickety, big Ian is a family man at heart. Home again today, Ian walked through his front door (the stitches should be out in three weeks, doctors say) and bowled another maiden over: yes, his new daughter Willow! Here they are pictured together (*picture deleted*) at the Bothams' specially buttressed and countersunk reinforced concrete home, 'Belters', in Station Road, Yeovil.

G. TOYBOX (Yorkshire): Rank and file Yorkshireman. Captain of own soul. Has no territorial ambitions. Scores runs these days (slightly fewer than M. BREARLEY) by 'piercing the field' – hence looks as though batting with a bodkin. Over the hill when far away, but likes Yorkshire moor.

P. EDMONDS (Middlesex): Went out with English touring team, Winter 1978/79. Probably came back. Probably did lots of things. Not many televised. Certain carried tray, wore hat. Swore under breath, I dare say, at

J. EMBUREY (Middlesex): who was expected to carry tray.

G. GOOCH (Essex): Has been unlucky with umpires' decisions, having been given out on a number of controversial occasions for unusual offences against the laws, e.g. picked nose, bowled Higgs; looked askance, bowled Hogg; hit ball once, etc. However, has stuck manfully to phlegmatic image. Could not look more like tobacco-planter if actually caught dibbing-in a sprig of Capstan Full Strength.

D. GOWER (Leicester): Batted throughout with poise, grace, skill, timing and carelessness. Must delete little-chip-shot-onto-green golf stroke from repertoire. Known as 'Gaah' to Australian commentators. Invariable comment during England's spells in the field, 'Of coorse, Gaah's *vairy* fast . . .' Gaah *is* fast, but having sprinted to retrieve ball, returns it with a languid arm as though launching paper plane. Odd.

M. HENDRICK (Derbyshire): Zoomed in on for propaganda purposes by Australian cameramen in order to make him appear even bigger than he is. Apart from empurpled Botham, is the bowler who looks happiest to take a wicket.

J. LEVER (Essex): Looked happy to get a run round the boundary, let alone bowl, the poor soul. Invariable comment, 'Of course, Levah's *vairy* fast . . .'

G. MILLER (Derbyshire): Calm, efficient spinner unsurprised by own success, although it seems to have surprised his captain. His faster ball, seen on TV, looks as glaringly obvious as Botham's slower one, but instead of being hit for six is rarely hit at all. Moral: very. You can tell by the moustache.

C. OLD (Yorkshire): Pulled self together and sprained everything. Brilliant on day release from hospital.

C. RADLEY (Middlesex): Unlucky. Sat in pavilion a lot. Played his part. Which is what any of us might have done in the circumstances. Will come again.

D. RANDALL (Nottinghamshire): Must be brought out of himself a little more. Technically, has tried more hooks than Izaak Walton.

R. TAYLOR (Derbyshire): Did he catch that catch? Well, *did he*? We cannot comment on this player until the matter his settled. His reputation is under a cloud. His teammates are lucky they were not all kept in afterwards. Tainted gloves, I fear, tainted gloves.

R. TOLCHARD (Leicestershire): Struck on face, has had an infernal cheek.

D. BAIRSTOW (Yorkshire): Sat-on face, has had a bloody nose. And a nice holiday.

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Weekend Competition

No 2554 **Set by Tim Hopkins**

We often feature re-writes of weighty poems/novels/plays in light-hearted verse forms How about reversing the process? Hieratic, dirge-like rethinks, please, of any work by Belloc, Lear, Wodehouse, Ayckbourne, etc, etc. Fourteen lines max by 9 March

Result of No 2551 **Set by Sue Denim**

Many writers of adult fiction turn their hands to children's books Perhaps other 20th-century writers – Joyce, Lawrence, Sartre, and so on – did too

Report **by Deaf Dave**

Several kinds of indirection were on offer here – and you took your chances well in a large and zestful entry Despite lots of tweeness, lots of Joyce (without exception a torment to read), and the odd gout of repulsive sentimentality, you turned this comp into an enjoyable catch-all, for which I shall award the winners £6 each

The Hill

J. picked up the pail with a strange sense of somewhere and sometime having heard of another little boy having done the same thing, and asked the other J.: 'Where do we fetch the water from?' 'The top of the hill,' she answered, starting to stride up it as she spoke. J. thought that the very top of a hill was an unlikely place to find water, and that, anyway, the laws of gravity being what they were – or at least seemed to be – it would be more sensible to stay at the bottom of the hill and, waiting for the water to trickle down, collect it in the pail when it had done so. Nevertheless, he followed the other J. and began to climb. Curiously, though, the further and faster they climbed, the more distant the top of the hill seemed to be, while at the same time, every leaf and twig on the ring of trees that crowned the summit began to stand out with extraordinary and, in the circumstances, bewildering clarity . . .

CLAUDE SPETTIGUE

Rat of Rat Hall

I murdered a yawn as I opened the burrow door. Lately I'd been getting electrical spasms in the paws. That bothered me. Something else bothered me; the air was heavy with musk.

Decorating the cheap chair behind the desk was a piece of rodent pulchritude with curves like italics and blonde whiskers that went on forever.

'I hope you don't mind me being here, Mr Moleowe.'

'I think you're a perfect rat.'

She blushed with divine discontent and adjusted her tail.

'That's some smoking jacket, really swell.'

I shrugged. Slow business, fast women. My life story.

'Say, I'm in big trouble.'

'Who isn't? Let me guess. Some photographs Al Toad has you'd rather Mother didn't see. Legs Badger and the Wild Wood Mob looking for some of the action.'

She went through more colour changes than traffic lights.

'Howja know?'

'Sister, I cover the waterfront.'

ROY KELLY

A Fire and a Frying-Pan

'I would deem this case one of the pot calling the kettle black,' said Syracusa the Saucepan in another tone.

'Colorisation did not feature in my riposte,' observed Petronella, the *pot-au-feu*, in a voice which had the ring of truth, but only a hollow ring.

'My understanding was altogether different,' said Killigrew the Kettle.

'Even so, Petronella exceeded her own normal standards of veracity,' sneered Theophilus the Toasting-Fork.

'Understanding may be beyond your comprehension,' said Petronella. 'And from a toasting-fork I would expect pointed remarks.'

'You are not disappointed then,' said Syracusa brightly, seeing a change in Petronella's condition. 'For that puts the lid on it. Literally as well as metaphorically.'

'One is not an "it" even though one gets into a stew when one is about to have a stew in one.'

Petronella gave a regal stare round the kitchen.

M. K. CHEESEMAN

Carry On, Squirrel

We Bobbe-Tailles are a rugged breed of bunny, but I don't mind revealing that the grey cells are pretty rocky at the starting-gate first thing in the a.m. An ideal start to the Bobbe-Taille day comprises the blessed Squirrel shimmering into the chamber equipped with a rallying posset of carrot-juice and a platter of b.-and-honey. Yet on this particular morning, a nasty sort of calamity lurked between fizzy and sticky; a missive from the dreaded relative Aunt Polly, inviting herself to tiffin that very afternoon!

Well – I say – what?

'Squirrel!', I croaked, 'Rally round.'

Squirrel swivelled, and floated over.

'Rum, Squirrel, no other noun for it.'

'To polite persons, sir, "rum" is an adjective.'

Squirrel talks like that, having an outsize dollop of brains. They say it comes from eating your greens.

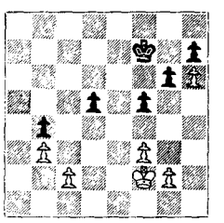
KEITH AITKEN

Tony Miles

Chess

No 121 **December Problems**

In problem 112 (6R1/2Q4p/p5bk/3p2p1/8/2P4RP/r5PK/8) the main line, 1.R-B3! QxR; 2.Q-N7ch, K-R4; 3.QxBch! PxQ; 4.R-R8 mate, was not too difficult to find, nor 1 . . .B-B4; 2.P-R4! There was some disagreement over the best answer to 1 . . . Q-K3; White can then try for a tactical win by 2.P-R4!? though this is rather complicated:- (a) . . . QxR; 2.PxPch, K-R4; (KxP; 4.Q-K5ch) 4.R-R3ch (4.Q-B4. RxPch!) K-N5; 5.R-N3ch, K-R4 (. . . K-B4; 6.R-B3ch mates) 6.Q-B4! B-K5; (or B-B4; 7.QxB) 7.R-R3ch, K-N3; 8.Q-B6 mate (b) . . . PxP; 3.Q-B4ch, K-R4; 4.R-K3 and R-K5 wins. (c) . . . RxPch; 3.KxR, Q-K7ch is not a perpetual check, as some thought:- 4.R-B2, B-K5ch; 5.K-R3! Q-K6ch; (QxR, Q-N7ch) 6.Q-N3, or 4.R-B2, Q-K5ch; 5.K-R2, QxPch; 6.K-N1, Q-N5ch; 7.K-B1, B-Q6ch; (or. . . Q-Q8ch; 8.K-N2, B-K5ch; 9.K-N3, Q-N8ch; 10.K-R3,Q-R8ch; 11.Q-R2) 8.K-K1, Q-N8ch; 9.K-K2, QxPch; 10.KxB, Q-B6ch; 11.K-B2, Q-K7ch; 12.K-N3, Q-Q8ch; 13.K-N4, Q-N8ch; 14.K-B5, Q-N4ch; 15.K-Q6 and wins. (d) . . .K-R4! causes difficulties. If 3.PxP, RxPch is perpetual: 4.KxR, Q-K7ch; 5.K-N3 (or 5.R-B2, B-K5ch; 6.K-N1, Q-K8ch; 7.R-B1, Q-K6ch) Q-K8ch, 6.K-R3, Q-K3ch! White can avoid this by 3.R(8)-KB8, say, but then his previous move loses its point. Consequently I prefer a quiet continuation, such as Mr Ram Mohan's suggestion of 2.Q-N7ch, K-R4; 3.R(8)-KB8! followed by the regrouping R-N3 and R(8)-B6 when Black, with his ki stranded, cannot hope to survive. My favouri solution, though, was that of Mr McSheehy, wl actually had the courage to ignore 1.R-B3, in favo of 1.R-N4! with the simple plan of 2.Q-N3 a 3.P-R4. There is remarkably little that Black can to avoid this. If 1 . . . Q-B8, say then 2.Q-N7c K-R4; 3.QxBch! as before, or 1. . . R-R8; 2.Q-N Q-B8; 3.R-R4ch! mating. 1 . . .Q-B2; 2.QxQ, Bx 3.R(8)xP is trivial, as is 1 . . . B-R4; 2.R(4)xP, Qx 3.RxQ; KxR; 4.Q-K5ch. 1 . . . B-K5 fails neatly 2.P-R4! PxP; 3.R-B4! B-B4; 4.Q-B6! and 1 . P-R4; 2.Q-N3, B-K5 also allows 3.P-R4! The b defensive try is 1 . . . Q-K3 again, but White squeeze in with 2.Q-N7ch, K-R4; 3.R-KR8, Q-B (forced-else RxPch) 4.R-KB8, Q-N8 (If 4 . . Q-K3; 5.R-B6, Q-K4ch; 6.R-N3, K-R5; 7.QxP B-R4; 8.R-B3 and R-Q3) 5.Q-B6! Q-B8; (P-R R-KR8) 6.R-KN8! with the familiar and n unstoppable threat of QxBch (K-R3, RxBch).

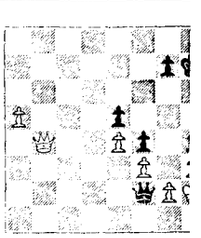


Problem 111 shou have been most intere ing. Unfortunately t black pawn on h7 w omitted from the pu lished diagram. It ca from a game Mestel Sznapik at the Buen Aires Olympiad. time trouble Bla played the ridiculous . . . P-B5? and after 2.K-K2 the game w adjourned. At first we assumed it was an easy w since White creates an outside passed pawn wi K-Q3 and P-B3. Only late at night did we reali the problems. Strangely the game is only drawn a it is White's advanced KR pawn that causes t trouble. Play continued 2 . . . K-R3; 3.K-Q3, K-Q (Inferior are 3 . . . K-Q3; 4.K-Q4, K-B3; 5.K-K K-B4; 6.KxP, K-Q5; 7.P-N4, K-B6; 8.K-K5, Kx 9.P-B4, KxP; 10.P-B5, PxP; 11.P-N5! with a pro able win in the queen ending, and 3 . . . K-K 4.P-B4, PxPep; 5.KxP, K-Q3; 6.K-Q4, K-B 7.K-K5, K-B4; 8.KxP, K-Q5; 9.P-QN4, K-B 10.K-K5, P-Q5; 11.P-N5, P-Q6; 12.P-N6, P-Q 13.P-N7, P-Q8=Q; 14.P-N8=Q, Q-Q5ch; 15.I K6, Q-K6ch; 16.Q-K5, QxRP; 17.K-B7, with slig chances) 4.P-B4, PxPep; 5.KxP, K-B3; 6.K-Q K-Q3; 7.P-N4, K-B3; 8.K-K5, K-N4; 9.KxQ KxNP; 10.K-K5, K-B4; 11.KxP, K-Q5! (surpr ingly important) 12.K-N5, K-K4; 13.P-N3 (Whi is forced to waste a crucial move to extricate l king) K-K3; 14.K-B4, K-B3; 15.K-K4, K-K (Not, though, . . . K-N4? 16.K-K5, KxP; 17.K-B K-R4; 18.K-N7, P-R3; 19.K-B6, P-N4; 20.K-B P-N5; 21.PxP mate!) 16.K-Q4, K-Q3; 17.K-B K-B3; 18.P-B4. (Or 18.K-N4, K-Q4! 19.P-B4 K-N5, P-N4 – P-N4! holds. Note that if White pawn were on KN2 here then 18.K-N4 would wi For instance 18 . . . K-Q4 – K-N3; 19.P-B4! a 20.P-N4 – 19.K-N5, P-N4; 20.K-N6, K-Q 21.K-N7, K-Q2; 22.K-N8! P-N5 – if . . . K-Q 23.P-N3! K-Q2; 24.P-B4! wins – 23.PxP, K-K 24.K-B7, K-B3; 25.K-Q6, K-N4; 26.K-K6, KxR 27.K-B5, K-N2; 28.K-N5, K-B2; 29.K-R6, K-B 30.P-N3! the point. Hence the significance Blacks 11th!) K-Q3; 19.P-N4, K-K3! (but not . K-B3? 20.P-B5! PxP; 21.P-N5! wins) 20.K-B K-K2; 21.K-Q4, K-Q3; and White can make more progress.

Prizewinners:– Messrs. McSheehy, Taylor £1 R. Brown and Sahasrabudhe £5, Ram Mohan £2

Problem 121

White to play continued 1.P-R6, expecting to win easily with 2.Q-R5. Was he right? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than 7 March.



Solution to problem 119

1 . . . BxN; 2.R-K1, (or 2.PxB, B-N5 wins) P-C 3.RxBch, B-K3! Resigns.

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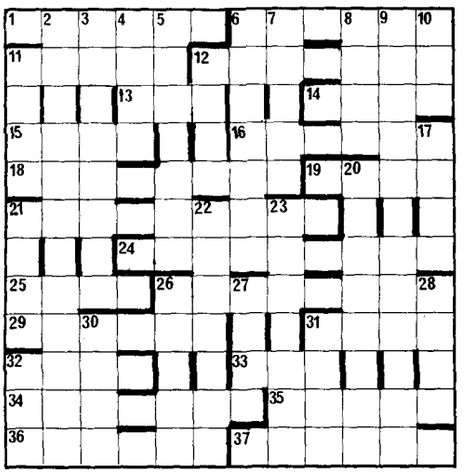
Salamanca: 15 'Literary — Ode'

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 15, New Statesman, Great Turnstile WC1V 7HJ, by first post 9 March.



Unclued answers in correct order (21 across, 35, 23, 10, 22, 1, 2, 7) are eight words that form a line from a poem. Unchecked letters from these make *MB's Feb ice.*

ACROSS

6 Fish dish produced from 1? (6).
11 Enter disguised as one of Dare's 'wooden' aliens? (5).
12 Cupola's oddly-shaped growth on mole? (7).
13 Chief, one to talk hot air mostly (3).
14 'That every like is not — —, O Caesar ...' (according to Brutus?) (4).
15 Type of rose found in bog (4).
16 Whence Milton's stately ship of American sailors? (6).
18 Mineral used in three-pin adapting (8).
19 Where Tennyson's brook sparkles with snow, say? (4).
24 In which man sets beast against beast (9).
25 Injure invulnerable part (4).
26 But he didn't excuse himself from narrating! (8).
29 What was left of Abraham's sacrifice for religious groups to visit? (6).
31 Taking leads from every centurion carrying emblem, behold the Roman ...(4).
32 ... Eagle raised by legion when just under half a century was lost to water? (4)
33 The reason teeth stick? (3)
34 If flung about, ship might be? (7).
36 Jan. gift? A month later return collection? (6).
37 Bear witness to where Arlott was regularly found? (6).

DOWN

3 Mac's gracious soldiers collecting odd fuels (8).
4 Veg. with fruit? That's not right (4).
5 Naive French girl on the spot, showing her embarrassment about what's acceptable (7).
6 Southern sloop making a hasty run (7).
8 About day mouse hides in soft ground (4).
9 Fish, somehow corpulent, see? (12).
11 Printer's frame missing one plate (4).
12 Monkey-beer (4).
17 Arms raised by Dibdin's Little Island (4).
20 Tending to prove that on specialised vine you'll find bulbous herb (8).
21 God involved in world evangelism (4).
26 Roughly paint a plate (5).
27 Some craggy stone (4).
28 More than one real twig? (4)
30 Remove careless opponent's man in a fit of anger (4).
31 Utter spell, getting up (4).
32 A long *black* vestment? (3).

Solution to No 1292

Prizewinners to No 1292

S. Newman (London SE3)
Richard Katz (Jerusalem)
B. Rees (London SE15)

APPOINTMENTS

THE CULTURA INGLESA — SAO PAULO

invites inquiries from

Qualified Teachers of English

preferably single and aged 25-35, interested in working in this large, dynamic city, the industrial and cultural centre of Brazil. Fabulous beaches only 50 miles away and easily reached by bus. Candidates should have a degree in English or modern languages plus a TEFL qualification and three years relevant experience. Interviews in London late April, appointments to commence 1 August.

Please write to: **Director of Studies, Sociedade Brasileira de Cultura Inglesa, Rua Maranhao 416, 01240 Sao Paulo - SP Brazil.**

ELECTRICAL POWER ENGINEERS' ASSOCIATION

AREA SECRETARY APPOINTMENT

A vacancy will shortly occur for an Area Secretary, and applications are invited.

The duties are, within the ambit of national agreements, to negotiate terms and conditions of employment with Electricity Boards for members of the Electrical Power Engineers' Association, and generally to represent and look after the interests of the Association's membership. The work is varied and challenging, involves travel, and carries considerable responsibility. Week-end and other out-of-hours work is involved. The ability to address meetings, conduct committees, prepare and present claims, and to act generally in a representative capacity, is essential.

Initially the salary scale of £6,055.35 to £8,436.28 (including self financing productivity bonus) will be paid, with the opportunity of progressing to the higher grade of £7,508.68 to £9,363.88 in due course, plus £160 general availability allowance. These salaries are all due to be reviewed in the near future. A car allowance is also paid. Initially the appointment will be located in the North West.

The EPEA is a constituent part of the Engineers' and Managers' Association, and represents the engineering, scientific and managerial staffs in the Electricity Supply Industry in the United Kingdom.

Further details from, or written applications to:

The General Secretary, Electrical Power Engineers' Association, Station House, Fox Lane North, Chertsey, Surrey KT16 9HW.
Applications should be sent to the General Secretary by **19 March 1979.**

Books

Our client, who operates a small chain of bookshops in London, wishes to make two appointments.

Buyer

The person appointed will take full responsibility, within agreed budgets, for buying all non-routine stock such as remaindered books, new novels, hardbacks and souvenirs. Previous contact with major publishers and booksellers is essential.

Merchandiser

The successful candidate will be expected to liaise with shop managers in displaying merchandise to the best advantage, and ensuring that the windows are always well dressed and attractive.

Applications are invited from men and women who can demonstrate relevant experience in this field. They should have a good knowledge of the London bookscene and have an interest in the arts generally. They should be able to work without close supervision. Age around 35.

Salary for both positions is negotiable and will reflect experience.

Please write, giving details of age, experience and salary progression to:–

J. D. Vine, Account Director (Ref. CRS/100),
Lockyer, Bradshaw & Wilson Limited,
North West House, 119/127 Marylebone Road,
London NW1 5PU.

LBW

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THE
BRITISH COUNCIL

Appointment of

Director-General

The Board of the British Council invites applications for the post of Director-General, which falls vacant on 1 May 1980. The Director-General is the chief executive of the Council. The post is open to serving staff and outside applicants, men or women.

The Council's objects, as defined in its Royal Charter, are to promote abroad a wider knowledge of Britain and of the English language and to develop closer cultural relations between Britain and other countries. In developing countries most of the work is in the form of educational aid. The Council is represented in 83 countries overseas and has a staff of 4,300. The annual budget, including educational aid programmes administered on behalf of the Ministry of Overseas Development and others, exceeds £100 million.

Applicants should have substantial administrative experience, the ability to establish relations of mutual confidence with the Government departments, organisations and individuals with whom the Council works, both at home and overseas, and a wide knowledge of British culture. The post involves extensive travel.

The appointment will be for an initial period of 5 years. The normal retirement age for senior Council staff is 60. The salary of the post will be £23,500 a year. The appointment is pensionable.

The closing date for applications is 30 April 1979. For further details and an application form, please write to the Secretary, The British Council, 10 Spring Gardens,, London SW1A 2BN, marking the envelope 'DG'.

Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians

Deputy General Secretary

Further applications are invited for the post of Deputy General Secretary of the ACTT which will be a permanent and pensionable post.

Please send full curriculum vitae to the **General Secretary, ACTT, 2 Soho Square, London W1** to be received not later than first post on **14 March 1979.**

COMMISSION FOR RACIAL EQUALITY

has a vacancy for a

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICER
(Education)

in the Public and Community Services (Promotion) Department of the Community Affairs and Liaison Division, and is looking for someone with wide experience in further and higher education and a knowledge of the needs of ethnic minorities.

Qualifications:
A degree or similar qualification would be desirable, as would some knowledge and experience of race relations. Promotional reports and booklets will be produced and some public speaking undertaken, therefore the successful applicant must be able to communicate well both verbally and in writing. The Commission is concerned with equal opportunity in further and higher education, therefore the successful applicant should have a good basic understanding of the full range of courses provided at Colleges of Further Education, Polytechnics and Universities. In addition, candidates would be expected to have a reasonable knowledge of the system of local education authority grants.

Salary:
The starting salary will be £4,842 per annum rising by five annual increments to £5,717 per annum. There is also an Inner London Weighting Allowance of £465 per annum.

Please write for application form and further details, quoting reference 'HEO Education' and enclosing a large self-addressed envelope, to the **Personnel Department, Commission for Racial Equality, 10/12 Allington Street, London SW1E 5EH.** Completed application forms must be received by the Commission not later than **21 March 1979.**

ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS

Regional Official

Applications are invited for the above post from a wide age range. The person appointed will be required to service branches of the Association in the North East and North West of England and will be stationed in that area.

The work will cover negotiations, assistance to branch committees on professional and organisational activities and maintaining contact with local groups of the Association's members in universities in the North East and North West of England.

Salary £5,604-£7,754 according to age and experience.
Full details from: **The General Secretary (RO), AUT, United House, 1 Pembridge Road, London W11 3HJ.** Closing date for receipt of applications **26 March 1979.**

POST OFFICE ENGINEERING UNION

Assistant Secretary Post

As a result of retirement, the Union invites applications for an Assistant Secretary post. The salary scale is £7,790 plus £363 Outer London Weighting rising by two increments to £8,260 plus £363 Outer London Weighting. Further details and application form can be obtained from **The General Secretary, Post Office Engineering Union, 150 Brunswick Road, Ealing, London W5 1AW.** Closing date for the receipt of completed application forms will be the first post of MONDAY 12 MARCH 1979.

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ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM OXFORD

Department of Antiquities

The Visitors of the Ashmolean Museum invite applications for a post of

Assistant Keeper

in the Department which is vacant now. Responsibility will be for the collections of the Late Saxon and Medieval periods and those of the recent past, including the Tradescant collection of rarities. Candidates should possess an honours degree. Knowledge of European languages and museum experience would be assets.
The stipend will be according to age on scale (under review): £3,883 (24 and under) — £8,257 (42 and over) and will be with superannuation.
Applications with the names of three referees and other relevant information should reach: **The Keeper, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford OX1 2PH,** not later than **31 March 1979.**
Further details may be obtained from the same address.

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

Melbourne, Australia

LECTURER IN CINEMA STUDIES

Cinema Studies is a Division of the Department of Art History in the School of Humanities. The appointee will be responsible for the administration and teaching programmes (first to fourth year undergraduate and postgraduate), as Head of the Division, for at least the first two years. Studio practice will NOT be part of the curriculum. Applicants should have a higher degree in film studies and teaching experience in the discipline. The appointee will be expected to commence duties late in 1979. The appointment is tenurable but will be for three years in the first instance.

SALARY: $A15,786 - $20,737.

Further information and application forms are available from the Association of Commonwealth Universities (Appts), 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PF. Applications close 4 April 1979.

Colaiste na hollscoile Corcaigh

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK

SOCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Applications are invited for a full-time appointment in Social Administration in the Department of Social Theory & Institutions. The College wishes to appoint at Statutory Lecturer level, and the ideal candidate would be in a position to coordinate and participate in a broad programme of undergraduate teaching in Social Administration and Policy, while furthering graduate teaching and research. It is possible, however, that an appointment might be made at Assistant Lecturer or College Lecturer level.

The salary scales (from 1 March 1979) are: Statutory Lecturer £7,221 - £9,530 p.a. College Lecturer £5,811 - £6,920 — Bar — £6,941 - £8,262 p.a. Assistant Lecturer £5,027 - £5,469 p.a.

Application forms and further details of the post may be obtained from the undersigned.

Latest date for receipt of applications is FRIDAY, 23 MARCH, 1979.

M. F. Kelleher — Secretary.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Applications are invited for

TWO LECTURESHIPS

in the Department of English Language and Literature, commencing in October 1979. The Department especially wishes to strengthen its teaching and research in literary, linguistic and stylistic studies with respect to Renaissance England and post-1800 Britain and America, but candidates with other interests will also be considered. It is expected that appointments will be made within the lower part of the lecturers' salary range — £3,909 to £7,754, plus £450 London Allowance. Further particulars can be obtained from the Assistant Secretary (Personnel), University College London, Gower St, London WC1E 6BT. Applications should reach him on or before 2 April 1979.

WESTFIELD COLLEGE

(University of London)

ARTS BASED COMPUTER PROGRAMME ADVISOR

Westfield College requires an advisory programmer for the Arts Faculty. Some projects involving computing have already been completed, others are in progress, but there is still much potential for developing further applications of computing in literary, linguistic and historical research. The successful applicant should be an arts graduate, with some research experience, who is a competent programmer, enthusiastic about computer techniques and capable of communicating this interest; the post carries an important educational function. Some knowledge of a foreign language would be desirable. Familiarity with literary/linguistic programme packages would be useful. Salary on Other Related Scale 1B or 1A (£3,861-£6,054 or £4,359 - £7,005 including London Weighting, under review) dependent on age, experience and qualifications. Telephone Dr Pat Galloway on 01-435 7141 Ext. 570 for an informal discussion, or write for full details and an application form to Dr J. Buckingham, Personnel Officer, Westfield College, Kidderpore Avenue, Hampstead, London NW3 7ST.

INTER-ACTION

is looking for a

QUALIFIED ACCOUNTANT

to control its new charitable operations in the artistic and educational fields from March 1979. Suitable applicants should be familiar with controlling a £1m turnover operation based in the UK and abroad and must be willing to involve themselves in our projects to a greater level than that of a normal work situation. Familiarity with the basic set-up of a bi-national touring company would be an advantage.

For further details please telephone DAVID POWELL or STEVE HENSON on 01-485 0881.

LONDON VOLUNTARY SERVICE COUNCIL

SECRETARY INFORMATION ASSISTANT

Busy information department needs experienced competent secretary preferably with interest in social policy and work of voluntary organisations. Good telephone manner and ability to type (IBM EXECUTIVE) to camera ready standard essential; shorthand useful. Good salary and holidays, LVs. Apply London Voluntary Service Council, 68 Chalton Street, NW1 1JR. 01-388 0241.

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There is a vacancy for an Executive Assistant to the General Secretary of the Engineers' and Managers' Association and its constituent body, the Electrical Power Engineers' Association. The EMA represents engineers, managers and scientists in industry at large, and the EPEA, which founded the EMA, represents these staffs in the electricity supply industry.

The duties of the post are to assist the General Secretary, particularly in the administrative discharge of his responsibilities to the main committees of the organisation. The work requires a good organisational and political sense, an ability to take lucid notes of meetings, to draft letters and statements, and to handle correspondence, inquiries etc. The successful applicant will be expected to exercise initiative (within broad guidelines) and to liaise with officers of other organisations, MPs, Civil Servants and journalists etc. The work is demanding, responsible and varied and will involve some travel and occasional overnight absences.

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The General Secretary,
Engineers' and Managers' Association,
Station House,
Fox Lane North,
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Closing date for applications — **Friday, 9 March 1979.**

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Closing date for applications: **8 March.**

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Courses continued from page 272

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Theatres

ALDWYCH THEATRE (Royal Shakespeare Company). 836 6404. Info. 836 5332. Bronson Howard's comedy 'Saratoga'. Final perfs Middleton & Rowley's 'The Changeling', 'As You Like It'. See daily press for dates and times. RSC also at The Warehouse in David Edgar's 'The Jail Diary of Albie Sachs'. Final perfs Mary O'Malley's 'Look Out . . . Here Comes Trouble!'

ARTS THEATRE. 836 3334
Worth queuing for from breakfast time, Financial Times.
TOM STOPPARD'S DIRTY LINEN
Mon. - Thurs. at 8.30. Fri. & Sat. 7.00 & 9.15.

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HAMPSTEAD THEATRE. 722 9301. Swiss Cottage Centre, NW3. 'Normal Service' by John Byrne, directed by Alan Dossor. Previews from 1 March Mon.-Sat. 8 p.m.

MAYFAIR. 629 3036/493 2031. (Green Pk. tube). Mon.-Fri. 8 p.m., Sats. 6 & 8.45. Tony Selby, David Dixon in 'Flashpoint' by Tom Kempinski directed by Anton Rodgers. 'Exciting . . . striking performances' E. Stan. 'A compelling play' D. Tel. 'Theatrically electrifying . . . worth seeing' Time Out. 'Prize Twists' Obs. 'So devastating . . . sheer dramatic tension . . . fine performances from all' D. Mail.

NATIONAL THEATRE. 928 2252. 'The Double Dealer', 'The Philanderer', 'The Long Voyage Home'. See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 928 2256.

ROYAL COURT. 730 1745. Prev. Mon. 8 p.m. Opens Tues. 7 p.m. subs eves 8 p.m. Sats 5 & 8.30 p.m. 'The London Cuckolds', Edward Ravenscroft's restoration farce.

TOWER. Canonbury Place, N1. Stoppard's 'Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead' tonight and tomorrow at 7.30. Next Fri. 'Crown Matrimonial'. Booking: 226 5111 (Mons 6.30-8, Tues-Sats 2.15-8).

Cinema

SCREEN ON THE HILL 435 3366 (opp. Belsize Park Tube). 'Remember My Name' (AA). 3.45, 5.30, 7.15, 9.15.

Poetry

ROUND HOUSE. 267 2564. An evening with Yevtushenko. 'The Face behind the Face'. Sun. 25 Feb. 7.30 p.m.

POETRY READING
James Simmons
Northern Ireland popular poet/song writer will perform on Thur. 1 March, **NATIONAL BOOK LEAGUE**, 7 Albemarle Street, W1, 6 p.m. Fri. 2 March, **THREE HORSE SHOES**, Heath Street, Hampstead. 8 p.m. for 8.30 p.m. Inquiries: **340 6200 (office hours)** **534 4960 (out of office hours)**

Exhibitions

GANYMED GALLERY, 11 Gt Turnstile, WC1. 405 9836. Original lithographs and etchings by Moore, Arthur Boyd, Whiteley, Lowry, also 18 & 19 C satirical prints.

ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS
Diploma Galleries
10th Anniversary of
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exhibition.
Selection of best student paintings and original prints.
Tues, 27 Feb 2-5.30 p.m.
Wed, 28 Feb - Sun, 4 March
10 a.m. - 5.30 p.m.

Meetings

GRESHAM LECTURES IN ASTRONOMY

COMETS AND CATASTROPHIES
by Dr D. W. Dewhirst

3 one-hour lectures
at The City University,
Northampton Square, EC1
at 5.45 p.m.

1, 8, 15 March

Admission Free.

GRESHAM LECTURES IN LAW

THE NEW LAW OF CONTRACT
by Professor C. M. Schmitthoff

3 one-hour lectures
at Gresham College,
Basinghall Street, EC4
at 6.00 p.m.

28 February, 7, 14 March.

Admission Free.

THE SHADOW PARLIAMENT CLUB. A must for all Political Pundits. 01-459 8225.

Yevgeny Yevtuschenko
will be signing his books (in English and Russian) and reading his poetry on
SATURDAY, 24 FEBRUARY from 12 noon to 1.30 p.m. at
COLLET'S INTERNATIONAL BOOKSHOP,
129-131 Charing Cross Road, London WC2.

CAMDEN FESTIVAL

17-31 MARCH 1979
Operas:
Phoenix Opera
DON QUIXOTE, Paisiello/Henze
Park Lane Group
FENNIMORE & GERDA, Delius
MAVRA, Stravinsky
Mastersingers of London & BBC Concert Orchestra
MITRIDATE, RE DI PONTO, Mozart (concert version)
Chelsea Opera Group
THE JACOBIN, Dvorak (concert version)
Concerts: Include jazz, choirs, opera groups and song recitals.
Other events: Music and dance from other lands (Indian, Greek, S. American, Polish, Irish, West Indian). Festival Jazz Week with Jazz Band Ball. London Contemporary Dance Theatre. 'The Sun King' and 'The Wisest Fool' (readings and music). Operetta Films. Sir Thomas Beecham Exhibition. Hungarian State Puppet Theatre. Drak Puppets (Czechoslovakia).
Brochure/Tickets: **Festival Office, St. Pancras Library, 100 Euston Road, London NW1 2AJ. 01-387 6293.**

GRESHAM LECTURES IN GEOMETRY

ZENO AND HIS MODERN RIVALS
by Professor C. W. Kilmister

3 one-hour lectures at The City University, Northampton Square, EC1 at 5.45 p.m.
26 February, 5, 12 March
Admission Free.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
Goldsmiths' College,
Lewisham Way, New Cross, SE14

SCHOOL OF ADULT AND SOCIAL STUDIES

Professor Norman MacKenzie will lecture on

'SIDNEY and BEATRICE WEBB — The Middle Class Revolutionaries'

Tuesday 27 Feb. 1979 6.30 p.m.

ADMITTANCE FREE
(Nearest tube: New Cross).

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON, Gower St, WC1E 6BT. Lunch Hour Lectures, 1.20 to 2. Admission free. 27 Feb. 'A Third-Century A.D. Philosophy Professor and the Problem of Free Will' by Dr R. W. Sharples; 1 March 'The Third Front'. Film directed by Peter Wyeth; 6 March 'Baghdad, Dunkirk, Kentucky and Louisiana: English Place-Names' by Mr J. M. Dodgson.

CLEM THOMAS MEMORIAL SEMINAR: Priorities in the Health Service. NUFTO Hall, London. 24/25 March. Nicholas Bosanquet, Dr John Dunwoody, Dr Victor Freeman, Hilary Hodge, BDS, LDS, S. T. Johnson (NALGO), Dr David Jones, John Lawson, FRCS, Renee Short, MP, J. I. Shulman, FPS, David Tuckett. Tkts. £3.50 (£2 a day). Students, pensioners £2 (£1 a day). Socialist Medical Association, 9 Poland St, W1V 3DG (01-439 3395). Tickets and further details.

CAMDEN COUNCIL for International Co-operation. 'Do You Know Your Rights — Would a Bill of Rights Help?' Prof. Michael Zander. Wed. 28 Feb. 6 p.m. Polytechnic of North London, Prince of Wales Rd, NW5.

LIFE IN CHINA TODAY: A day school with film, slides, talks Saturday 3 March, 10-4. Mary Ward Centre, 9 Tavistock Place, WC1. Tel. 01-387 1816. Fee £2.

YOUNG FABIANS — 'The Press in Britain'. Dennis MacShane, President of the NUJ will speak on the current press crisis at the LSE, Houghton St, WC2, Tues. 27 Feb., 8 p.m. 50p.

FRIDAY 23 FEB. 7.30. Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist). 'Devolution and the EEC: Whose Benefit?' Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, WC1.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Sun. 25 Feb. 8 p.m. Open Question/Answer Meeting. All welc. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2.

Courses

ELEMENTS OF MARXISM. 3 Saturdays: 3 March, 21 April, 9 June. Fundamental tenets of Marxist economics, current trends and debates. Tutors: Betty Matthews, Martin Jacques, Ron Bellamy, Irene Brennan. Fees: £1.50 per session, £4 the series. Further information from: Julia Kessell, Short Course Unit, PCL, 309 Regent Street, W1. Tel: 01-580 2020 ext 220.

FRENCH, SPANISH, GERMAN, ITALIAN, Russian. Full-time day courses. Evening courses. Conversation (all grades), courses for GCE 'O' & 'A' levels & Institute of Linguists. Special Easter Courses. Mentor for Languages, 115N Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (Cambridge Circus). 836 3753.

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FRENCH & SPANISH offered by qualified native teachers. Tel. 935 8641.

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